Old Greek Stories

The Siege of Troy and the Wanderings of Ulysses

BY

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THE MEETING OF HECTOR AND ANDROMACHE.

Page 90.

OLD GREEK STORIES.

THE SIEGE OF TROY

AND THE

WANDERINGS OF ULYSSES.

BY

CHARLES HENRY HANSON,

AUTHOR OF "STORIES OF THE DAYS OF KING ARTHUR."

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Preface.

THE design of this book needs but little explanation. Of all the legends of Ancient Greece, there are none which are so constantly referred to in classic or in modern literature as those connected with the Trojan War. Mythic though they be, they may be said to form the foundation of Greek History. Of the cycle of epic poems in which they were embodied, only the great Homeric Poems, the Iliad and the Odyssey, have been preserved. But these epics present nothing more than episodes of the long story, though it is true that those episodes are the most important of the whole. The endeavour of the present writer has been to present the legends in one connected story, beginning with the founding of Troy, and ending with Ulysses' safe return and his vengeance on the enemies of his house. The story is told in simple language, and the Homeric narrative, so far as it covers the ground, has been faithfully followed.

The author ventures to hope that the book will not only be attractive to young readers, but will also prove useful, by giving

them an acquaintance with an important part of the Greek mythology which school manuals do not usually describe at any length.

The Latin names of the deities are generally used instead of the Greek, because in nine cases out of ten they are the names with which children, in this department of their studies, first make acquaintance.

C. H. H.

In order to prevent confusion between this work and another of a similar character, its title has been changed from "*Homer's Stories Simply Told*" to that now given to it.

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"The incidents, as we read them in Homer, touch us as we are touched by a fairy tale."

CONINGTON.

THE SIEGE OF TROY

AND THE

WANDERINGS OF ULYSSES.

PART I.—THE STORY OF TROY.

CHAPTER I.

ABOUT THE GREEKS, AND THE FOUNDING OF TROY.

LONG, long time ago, more than a thousand years before our Lord came with his message of peace to mankind—hundreds of years even before the foundations were laid of that great city of Rome whose people afterwards conquered so many other nations—the little country which we now know as Greece, but which was then called Hellas, was inhabited by a people who called themselves the Hellenes. The land in which they dwelt was beautiful, with high mountains and green valleys, spreading forests and clear-flowing streams. The bright rays of the sun which shone upon it for the greater part of the year were tempered by the cooling breezes

from the blue Mediterranean, which washed its winding shores; and in the winter the chill of the fierce blasts that swept over the country from the north were softened by the same kindly influence. On the bosom of this sea were many lovely islands, which were inhabited by men of the same race as that which peopled the mainland.

Though they were for the most part of one blood and one language, the Hellenes did not form one united nation as the people of France or Great Britain do now-a-days. Though their country was scarcely so large as Scotland, it was divided into many small independent territories, over each of which there reigned a king, who owed his rank and power either to his own courage and skill in arms, or to the deeds of his forefathers. These leaders of the people were commonly called Heroes, and the word "heroism" is still used in our own language to describe any great act of bravery or of self-sacrifice. The heroes were, even more than the chiefs of our own Highland clans used to be, the fathers of their people. They led their warriors in battle, and ruled over their little kingdoms in time of peace with the assistance and advice of the oldest, wisest, and bravest amongst their followers. In the little cities which were scattered over Greece, the palace of the king was usually the largest and most stately building, and its gates were ever open. In its great hall the monarch, with his chief warriors and counsellors, every day feasted, and heard the complaints and demands of those who came to him for redress or for reward. Hither, too, came those who, from various causes, had fled from other kingdoms; and who, when they besought shelter and protection at the hands of the

chief into whose territory they had wandered, sat down on the hearth among the ashes until they were summoned to the board and greeted as guests.

A free and fierce life in those days was that of the men of Hellas. Afterwards they became exceedingly skilled in the arts. There arose among them famous painters and sculptors, mighty poets and teachers, whose writings still remain among the most wonderful ever produced by men. But as yet, though they were wiser, and even gentler in their lives than most of the neighbouring peoples—whom, indeed, they looked upon as barbarians—most of them were engaged in tilling the ground and in rearing flocks and herds; while for the heroes and their warriors the chief occupations were the chase of the wild beasts that were to be found in the forests, and expeditions against other kingdoms; and this latter was esteemed by far the noblest work of all. Among these little communities there prevailed continual war. No mercy was shown to the vanquished; and their women and children were carried off as slaves to the homes of their conquerors.

But though the Hellenes were thus fond of war, they had a religion, though it was very different from ours. They had never heard of the God whom now all Christian nations worship, but they believed in a great many gods. They thought, indeed, that all nature was filled with supernatural beings; that every little stream, every grove, nay, every tree, had its own deity. But at the head of all the gods they placed Zeus, whom the Romans afterwards called Jupiter, and who is usually spoken of by this name now-a-days. Jupiter, according to the Greeks, dwelt

on the top of a high mountain in Northern Hellas, named Olympus, and with him also dwelt most of the other principal deities; so that in the belief of the Hellenes, Olympus was indeed heaven, the abode of the gods. Jupiter ruled over the whole world, but his especial dominion extended to the heavens and the earth. He had two brothers: Neptune was the monarch of the sea, and Pluto of the regions in the interior of the earth, to which, as the Greeks believed, the spirits of all the dead were consigned, there to be judged either to perpetual suffering in Tartarus, or to eternal bliss in a beautiful country called Elysium. Besides these three brothers, the chief deities were Juno, the sister and wife of Jupiter, and queen of heaven; Pallas or Minerva, whom the Greeks believed to have sprung forth, fully armed, from the head of Zeus, and who was goddess of wisdom and of all the useful arts; Venus, the goddess of beauty, also a daughter of Jupiter, but who was always pictured as having arisen from the foam of the sea, and hence was called by the Greeks Aphrodite, which means "issued from sea-foam"; Eros, or Cupid, the son of Venus, and god of love; Ceres, the goddess of agriculture, and presiding deity of all the fruits of the earth; Apollo, or Phœbus, the god of the sun, who was supposed to give light and heat to the earth by a daily journey in a chariot of fire across the sky; Diana, or Artemis, sister of Apollo and daughter of Jupiter, the goddess of maiden purity and of the chase; Vulcan, the god of fire and of the art of working in metals; Mars, the god of war; and Mercury, or Hermes, the god of swiftness, of eloquence, and of cunning. All these principal deities, with innumerable minor ones, were supposed, though enjoying immortality and supernatural powers, to

share also the passions, and many of the sorrows, of mankind. They often descended from Olympus to live among mortals, took wives or husbands from among them, favoured their fortunes, and espoused their quarrels. Indeed it was owing, in the first place, to a jealousy among the divine occupants of Olympus that there arose that great war between the Hellenes and the people of the rich and powerful city of Troy, the story of which is related in that famous poem, the Iliad of Homer, and is to be the subject of this book.

One need not have gone far in the study of geography to know that there is a point, a little way north of Greece, where the continent of Europe is only separated from that of Asia by a narrow strait called the Hellespont. The part of Asia fronting this strait was a country called, in those early days, by various names, but which afterwards came to be known as Mysia. The people of Thrace—a country lying north of Greece proper, but whose inhabitants had much intercourse with the Hellenes—had sent over expeditions into this country of Mysia many years before the time at which this story begins, which had conquered and settled the northern parts of it. And these Thracian settlers had built many flourishing cities, both along the coast and inland. But the principal city of all, because it was the largest and the most strongly defended by gigantic walls and ramparts, was the famous city of Troy, called also Ilium. It stood on a plain near the sea, and in the vicinity of the lofty Mount Ida. Its founder was said to be a hero named Ilos, a descendant of Jupiter and of one of the many mortals whom the god had married; and the site of it had been chosen by Jupiter himself. For, when Ilos was a

youth he set forth from the court of his father Tros, King of Dardania—a small territory on the Hellespont—to seek his own fortune. Wandering inland, he came to the city of the king of Phrygia, where just then games were being held for prizes given by the king. Ilos took part in the games, and he was so successful as a wrestler that he won fifty youths and as many maidens who had been offered as prizes. Moreover, the king of Phrygia, in obedience to the voice of an oracle, treated Ilos with great honour; and when at last he departed from the court with his new vassals, the monarch gave him a spotted cow, and bade him build a city for himself wherever the animal should lie down. Ilos, his youths and his maidens, accordingly followed the spotted cow; and though in these days a man would be thought mad indeed to be guided in anything by the actions of a beast, yet the hero believed that he was fulfilling the injunctions of the gods, and that they had inspired the cow. She wandered on for many weary miles, until she came to the foot of Mount Ida, where a lovely green pasture, watered by two little streams that united in the plain below, and sheltered by the forest-grown side of the mountain, tempted her to rest. Here, at all events, she lay down, and here Ilos and his followers pitched their tents for the night. Ere he went to rest, the hero prayed to Jupiter to give him a sign that this was a fit site for the city he meant to build. When he rose the next day he found outside his tent a vast wooden image of Pallas (as the Greeks called Minerva) which had been sent down from heaven. Thus encouraged by the approval of the gods, Ilos forthwith began the building of his city. The image of Minerva, which was called the Palladion, he and his followers

looked upon with special veneration, and believed that so long as it was preserved their city would be safe from all perils.

So was Troy founded, and it grew and flourished so exceedingly that even in the lifetime of its first king, Ilos, it became a great and powerful city, and the head of all the Thracian towns and colonies in that country. Among the cities and kingdoms of Greece there were at that time none that were so mighty. And this prosperity continued after Ilos' death, and when his son Laomedon had become king.

But Laomedon was not worthy of the good fortune that fell to him. Ruler over a strong and populous city, tracing his own descent back to Jove himself, and married to the daughter of the river-deity Scamander—whose stream washed the walls of Troy—he became puffed up with pride, and seemed to think that not even the gods themselves would dare to call him to account. His haughtiness and bad faith brought down terrible disasters on himself and on his people.

Though, as I have said, Jupiter was supreme over all the other deities, he had only gained that lofty position after a great struggle, in which, aided by his brothers and sisters and some monstrous giants, he had conquered and dethroned his father Kronos, or Saturn. Nor was his own authority dependent on anything but his superior might and cunning, which had enabled him to baffle more than one attempt of the other gods to rise against his rule. It happened that while Laomedon was reigning at Troy, Juno planned with Neptune and with Minerva to deprive Jupiter of his authority and imprison him with chains. But the king of gods and men became aware of their design,

defeated it, and punished severely those who had taken part in it. Neptune was sentenced to be deprived for a whole year of his kingdom of the sea, and, in company with Apollo, who had also offended Jupiter, to become the servant of King Laomedon. The king was eager to gain all the advantage he could out of the services of his immortal and powerful bondsman, and bade him surround Troy with new walls, mightier than any which had before been reared by men, promising him a rich reward when the work was accomplished.

If for a while Neptune was no longer lord of the sea, he was still a deity scarcely less powerful than Jove himself. The task which would have been impossible for mortals had no difficulties for him. Huge blocks of stone were torn from their primeval bed in the mountains, squared into proper shape, and fitted together in a gigantic wall that seemed strong enough to defy any earthly force. The new fortifications rose with wonderful quickness, and when the sea-god's term of servitude was over, the work which Laomedon had given him to do was finished also, and he came to the king to claim his reward. With him also came Apollo, who during the year had faithfully tended Laomedon's flocks upon Mount Ida.

But having got all that he had desired, the king now haughtily refused to make good his part of the bargain. Jove, he said, had bid them do him service, and for this enforced labour they had no right to a reward; and he scornfully bade them begone from his presence and from his kingdom.

The gods were not slow to punish bad faith between man and man; very swiftly and sternly, therefore, did their retribution

descend upon one who had been false to themselves. Neptune and Apollo quitted the realms of Laomedon in the mortal guise they had worn while in his service. But Neptune's dominion over the sea was now restored to him, and he sent the raging waters up from their accustomed bed over the rich pasture lands of Troy, to the very foot of the walls that he himself had reared. When at last the flood retired, and the trembling people, who had feared the destruction of the whole city, came forth to behold the ravages of the waters upon their lands, a new calamity befell them. A hideous monster came up from the sea, and slaughtered and devoured them without ceasing. The unhappy Laomedon now repaired to the temple of Minerva, in which stood the heaven-sent Palladion, and sought to know by what means the offended deities could be appeased. The answer which the priests were inspired to give him was, that every day a maiden must be given up to the sea-monster, which otherwise would be permitted by the gods to work even more cruel havoc than it had yet committed.

When this sentence was made known to the king and to the people, there was weeping and lamentation in all the households of the city; for none knew how soon their hearths might be desolated. And the people murmured, and said that since it was the offence of their king which had brought down this calamity upon them, his own daughters should be the first maidens to be offered up. But at last it was agreed that every day lots should be drawn among all the young girls in the city to decide which of them should be the victim; and the king's three daughters drew lots along with the rest. Day after day passed, and each

day the doom fell upon some young maiden, who, after her kindred had bidden her a weeping farewell, was led forth and chained to a rock near the shore; and then they who cared to look on from a distance at what followed, beheld the grim monster rise up from the waves and devour the hapless victim. The people cursed the mighty walls and towers which had been reared at the cost of the lives of their nearest and dearest; and each day the heart of King Laomedon was thrilled with dread lest the fatal lot should be drawn by one of his own daughters.

This calamity at last befell Hesione, the eldest and fairest daughter of the king. But while the miserable Laomedon was preparing to send forth the maiden to her death, there entered the city a stranger, whose appearance was so noble and stately that in gazing upon him the people well-nigh forgot their sorrow. In stature he was taller by the head and shoulders than any man in Troy. Very beautiful was his face, with blue eyes that beamed with a serene lustre, and long golden hair that fell upon his shoulders. In his hand he carried a club so huge that no man of ordinary strength could have lifted it; and his garment was the tawny skin of a lion. As he strode through the streets toward the palace, the people gathered about him, and followed him with awe; and many cried out that this was surely a god, come to relieve them in their distress.

"Nay," he answered, "no god am I; but yet perchance I may rid you of the curse that afflicts you. Let me have speech of your king."

He was none other than the great hero Hercules, the son of Jove by a mortal mother, and the mightiest warrior who at that

time was alive upon earth. Ever since his boyhood his life had been passed in wandering from one land to another, in slaying the cruel robbers and the savage monsters who, as the legends tell us, in those days infested the world, and in doing other mighty deeds for the benefit of mankind. They brought him now to King Laomedon, who entreated him to save the life of his daughter, and promised him any reward he might choose.

Now Laomedon had in his stables four steeds of immortal birth and unequalled strength and swiftness, which Jove had long before given to the king's grandsire Tros, King of the Dardanians. These horses Hercules coveted, and he said that he would encounter the sea-monster and rescue Hesione if the king would bestow them upon him. Laomedon was loath to part with the horses, but neither could he bear to lose his daughter, so he covenanted to do as Hercules asked. Then Hesione was led forth as so many maidens had been before—though none so beautiful as she—and was chained to the rock to await the coming of the sea-monster; but Hercules stood beside her, ready to fulfil his undertaking.

In no long time the huge beast came forth from the sea, and advanced toward Hesione with cruel jaws distended, all eager for his horrible feast. Then the hero sprang forward, with his club in his uplifted right hand, and his lion-skin rolled about his left arm for a defence. Against the club of Hercules the strength and ferocity of the monster availed nothing; with merciless strokes he beat it to the ground, and ceased not his blows till its hideous body lay lifeless before him. Then he turned to the king's

daughter, and took the chains from her wrists, and led her back to her father, who, with the joyful people, was waiting for her return at the gate of the city.

It might be thought that Laomedon had now learned how terrible was the penalty with which the gods visited bad faith. But as soon as the instrument of his punishment was destroyed, he became hard, and covetous, and false as before. Now that his daughter was safe, he would not part with the immortal steeds which he had promised to Hercules for a reward. He shut the gates of Troy, and refused to fulfil his promise. Full of wrath the hero departed; but ere many months were over he returned to the Trojan coast with ships and many warriors. Advancing suddenly, he entered the city when there was no thought of danger. Making his way to the palace, he slew Laomedon and all his sons, save only the youngest, whose name was Priam. Him also Hercules would have put to death, but that his sister Hesione interceded for him so earnestly that the hero was moved to pity, and not only spared Priam's life, but made him King of Troy in his father's place. But Hesione herself he carried off, with much spoil, to Greece, and gave her as a wife to one of his friends, a hero of the name of Telamon.

Thus fearfully was Laomedon punished for the crimes of which he had been guilty. His son Priam was a good and blameless king. He ruled over Troy well and wisely, so that it became more flourishing than ever. He took for his wife the daughter of a Thacian king, a princess named Hecuba, and had many stately sons and beautiful daughters. So with him for a long time all went well.

CHAPTER II.

PARIS AND APHRODITE.

HE eldest son of King Priam, by his wife Hecuba, was named Hector, and he grew up to be the bravest warrior and hero among all the Trojans. Before the birth of the second son, his mother dreamed that he would take the form of a lighted torch, which would destroy all the city of Troy. In those days great respect was paid to dreams, which were believed to be direct messages or forewarnings of good or evil fortune from the gods. When, therefore, Hecuba made known her dream to the king her husband, he and his soothsayers—men who professed to be able to interpret the meaning of such visions—agreed that if the child about to be born were allowed to live, he would in some way bring about the ruin of the kingdom; and so it was determined that he should be put to death. It is easy to imagine with what sorrow King Priam, who was not a hard and cruel man, as many of the monarchs and chiefs of that time were, came to this resolution; and when the child was born, and proved to be a beautiful and sprightly boy, the king could not bear to have him slain. So he was given to one of the shepherds that tended the king's flocks on Mount Ida,

who was ordered to expose him in the dense forest that grew high up on the mountain. In this forest many fierce wild beasts had their dens, and it was thought that the child would certainly be devoured, or would perish from want of that food and care which very young infants need so continually. The shepherd was a man of kindly heart, and it was with great sorrow that he obeyed the king's command, placed the helpless little baby at the foot of a lofty tree, and left it there, thinking that assuredly it must soon perish.

But the doom of Troy was destined to be wrought through this innocent child, and the decree of the Fates was not to be thwarted by any contrivance of men. The Dryads, as the tender nymphs who peopled the wild-wood were called, beheld the deserted babe, and shielded it from all evil. Some of them fed it with honey from the wild bees' stores, and milk from the white goats that fed on the rich pastures of the mountain. Others drove away the savage beasts that would have devoured it, and covered it with leaves to protect it from the night dews. So it came about that when, after five days, the shepherd came again to the foot of the tree, fully expecting to find nothing of the child except perhaps its blood-stained raiment, he saw it lying there, bright-eyed and smiling; and when it stretched out its little arms to him, he heeded no longer the command of King Priam, but took up the infant and carried it to his own humble cot, where his wife took charge of it. The boy grew, and became more beautiful every day. He passed for the shepherd's son, and was named Paris. Reared among the flocks and herds that belonged to the king his father, he also became a shepherd, and, while yet a

youth, was the foremost of all that dwelt on Mount Ida in rural sports, the swiftest and boldest in the chase, the most valiant and expert when, as in those troublous times often happened, the shepherds had to take arms to resist the robbers that sought to carry off their flocks. So Paris grew to manhood, handsome, sprightly, and devoid of care or ambition; because he knew nothing of his royal birth, but deemed himself the son of the shepherd who had saved his life. While tending his sheep he met a lovely nymph named Œnone, the daughter of the deity of the river Cebren; and she, though she might have married one of greater rank and wealth, was won by his great beauty, and became his wife.

But now that Paris had come to manhood, the time was drawing near when his destiny must be fulfilled, and when he must change the peaceful and innocent life he led amid the pleasant groves and meadows of Mount Ida for a higher but stormier career. And thus the matter came about. One of the greatest and most famous of the heroes of Greece at that time was Peleus, the King of Phthia, a country in Thessaly. He was greatly loved by the gods, and Jove bestowed upon him in marriage a beautiful Nereid or sea-nymph named Thetis, who was so fair that many of the immortals themselves had sued for her hand. To the marriage-feast all the gods were bidden, save one only—Eris, the goddess of discord. She, deeming herself slighted, was exceedingly angry; and while the feast was being held in the great hall of Peleus' palace, and all the guests, mortal and divine, were gathered at the board, she entered the apartment, and cast down upon the table a golden apple upon which were inscribed the

words, "For the fairest." Thereupon a great strife arose among the goddesses as to which of them was entitled to the glittering prize; but the three great deities, Juno and Minerva and Venus, were the most eager in claiming it, and all the others shrank from contesting it with them. Among themselves, however, the quarrel rose higher and higher, until at last Zeus himself, to prevent further strife, commanded that the three goddesses should go to Mount Ida, where the shepherd Paris was tending his flocks, and leave it to him to decide which of them should have the apple.

To Mount Ida the goddesses went accordingly, and called upon Paris to give his judgment. Very beautifully has our own poet Tennyson described that memorable scene. First he pictures the handsome shepherd:—

> "White-breasted, like a star
> Fronting the dawn, he moved; a leopard skin
> Drooped from his shoulder, but his sunny hair
> Clustered about his temples like a god's;
> And his cheek brightened as the foam-bow brightens
> When the wind blows the foam."

Then he tells how the three great goddesses came to listen to the judgment:—

> "It was the deep mid-noon; one silvery cloud
> Had lost his way between the piny sides
> Of this long glen. Then to the bower they came,
> Naked they came to that smooth-swarded bower,
> And at their feet the crocus brake like fire,
> Violet, amaracus, and asphodel,
> Lotos and lilies."

First Juno spoke, and, to tempt Paris to give the prize to her, promised him a mighty empire and boundless wealth. Next Minerva offered him glory and victory in war, and wisdom wherewith to make himself great and worthy of all honour. Lastly Venus smiled upon him with the bright eyes and rosy lips that brought gods and men alike to her feet, and, half-whispering, promised that if the apple became hers she would

The Judgment of Paris.

bestow upon him for a wife the fairest of all women in the wide world. At her smile and at her words Paris forgot the thoughts of proud ambition which had filled his heart when Juno spoke; forgot the nobler purpose of a heroic life with which Minerva's offer had inspired him; forgot his faith and his love due to his fair and true wife Œnone—and gave the prize to Venus. Fatal

was his choice to his country, to himself, and to thousands of brave men and happy women in Greece and in Troy. Juno and Pallas retired with hearts full of wrath; and Venus took the apple, and, smiling once again, bade him bide his time for the happiness she had promised him.

But from that day Paris was filled with a strange unrest, a feeling that made him discontented with all around him. No more did he care to tend his flocks and herds on the green slopes of Mount Ida, or to carry off the prize from all his fellow-shepherds in the foot-race or at the wrestling-match. The glorious face of the goddess of beauty, and the words she had whispered in his ear, were never out of his thoughts. Avoiding the society of Œnone, whom he loved no longer, he wandered alone about the groves and on the banks of the streams that descended from the heights of the mountain, wrapped in day-dreams which he could not himself have put into words. It chanced that one day he met a shepherd who was returning from the city below, and who told him that one of the kindred of the king having just died, games were about to be held—as the custom was in those days—on the occasion of his funeral. The idea suddenly occurred to Paris (sent to him by Venus) of taking part in these games, and competing for the goodly prizes that were to be offered. He had heard how Ilos, the founder of Troy, had fared in such an adventure, and he asked himself why he should not have the like fortune. Therefore, without telling any one of his purpose, he set off early the next morning for the city, and arrived there just as the games were about to be commenced in the open space before the palace of King Priam.

All eyes were cast upon this young stranger, tall and beautiful as a god, as he thrust his way through the throng of spectators, and asked leave of those who presided over the games to enter his name as one of the competitors. At that time, kings lived much more familiarly with their subjects than they do now-a-days; they fought along with them in battle, and mingled with them in every-day life. Thus it was that Paris' elder brother Hector, and a younger brother named Deiphobus, were among those who took part in the games; while King Priam, Queen Hecuba, and their other children were among the spectators. Of these children the fairest was the Princess Cassandra; but though she was indeed beautiful, there was a strange wildness in her looks, and she sat apart from the rest. Her story was a strange one. She and her twin-brother Helenus had once been left, while very young, asleep in the Temple of Apollo, who was believed by the ancients to be not only the god of light, but the presiding deity of oracles and of prophecy. While the children slept, some sacred serpents that dwelt in the temple came and licked their ears with their forked tongues, so that ever after the two could understand the sounds of nature and the voices of birds. When they grew up, Helenus became a priest at Apollo's shrine, and one of his father's most trusted counsellors. Cassandra often went to the temple to sleep; and the god, visiting his shrine, was won by her beauty, and sought her in marriage. Cassandra loved him not, but promised that if he would confer upon her the gift of prophecy she would be his. When, however, Apollo had conferred the prophetic power upon her, she refused to fulfil her promise. The angry deity could

not revoke his gift, and in spite of his wrath he could not bear to harm the woman he loved; but he revenged himself by ordaining that no one should believe her prophecies. Thus the power she had gained was nothing but a source of misery to her. She foresaw the ruin that was about to descend upon her country, but when she uttered her warnings no one took heed to her words. All thought that she was mad, and therefore avoided her. So was it that she sat alone at the games, and on her face was a great cloud of sadness.

Presently the competitors were ranged in order for a foot-race. Hector was the tallest and most stately of them all; but the stranger from Mount Ida was the most beautiful, and every woman among all the onlookers—save only Cassandra—secretly wished that he might gain the golden vase that was to be the prize of the winner. Now the signal was given, and away bounded the vigorous youths, with flying feet and flashing eyes and hair streaming in the wind, each straining every nerve to gain and keep the lead. In speed Paris was really no match for his brother Hector, who excelled in all manly exercises; but now Venus put endurance into the heart and swiftness into the limbs of the young shepherd, and in spite of all that Hector could do, he came in the winner. So it was in the chariot-race, so in the wrestling-match, and in casting the stone. Paris won every prize, and seemed to know no fatigue.

When the king's sons saw this stranger conquering them in every sport in which they had always before been accustomed to triumph, their hearts swelled with wrath; and at last they advanced toward Paris with intent to slay him. But just then

Cassandra sprang to her feet, and called upon them to forbear, because their conqueror was their brother. Great was their amazement—and also that of Paris—when their sister said this; and they might not have believed her, but that the old shepherd whom Paris had always believed to be his father stepped forth from among the spectators and confessed what he had done with the infant given to him more than twenty years before by the king to be exposed on the mountains. Then were all the anger and wonderment turned into rejoicing. King Priam and his queen were full of pride and happiness when they learned that this noble youth was none other than the son they had cast out with such sorrow so long ago. All the people shared in their good king's joy—all except Cassandra, who still sat apart, muttering dark sayings to herself; for well she knew what calamities Paris was destined to bring upon Troy.

But of this there was no thought in the mind of any one else. Hecuba heeded no longer the warning of her dream. Paris was led into the palace, and his kin seemed eager to make up, by the love and endearments they lavished upon him, for their long unmindfulness. Not Hector himself was more dear to Priam and to Hecuba; but the great soul of Hector knew no jealousy, and he was not behind any of the rest in the welcome he gave to Paris.

That prince returned no more to Mount Ida, and thought not any longer of the unhappy Œnone. He still remembered the promise of Venus, and passionately thirsted for its fulfilment. Neither was the goddess herself unmindful of it; and very soon she set about its accomplishment.

CHAPTER III.

PARIS AND HELEN.

AT the time of the restoration of Paris to his rank and place in the house of his father King Priam, the two most powerful of the kings of Greece were Agamemnon, King of Mycenæ, and his brother Menelaus, King of Sparta. They were the sons of a hero named Atreus, who was himself descended from Zeus, but whose family annals had, in his own and earlier generations, been stained by many terrible crimes, and whose line was believed by the Greeks to be doomed to perpetual misfortune. At this time, however, both Agamemnon and Menelaus were exceedingly prosperous and happy. Having expelled a usurping uncle named Thyestes from the throne of Mycenæ, Agamemnon ruled there with undisputed sway; and his territory was larger and his subjects more numerous than those of any other king among the Hellenes. In his youth, when he had been driven from Mycenæ by Thyestes, he had taken refuge with his younger brother Menelaus at the city of Sparta, where at that time Tyndareus was king. Tyndareus was the father, by his wife Leda, of two daughters. The elder of these, named Clytemnestra, became the wife of Agamemnon, and

Queen of Mycenæ. The younger was Helen, who was destined to become the most famous woman in Greek story, and the immediate cause of the great war between the Hellenes and Troy.

She was the most beautiful woman in the world—fair as Aphrodite herself. The fame of her beauty had spread to all the neighbouring lands, and the most renowned heroes of Greece flocked to her father's court, seeking her hand in marriage. Among them was Diomedes, King of Argos, a warrior of great valour, and the son of Tydeus, who in his time had been one of the principal heroes of Greece. From the rich and populous island of Crete came its king Idomeneus—a bold and ardent wooer. Menestheus, son of the King of Athens, was a warrior of renown, who had driven the great hero Theseus from his throne. From the far western isles of Dulichium and the Echinades came their prince, Meges. In youthful grace and warlike skill and courage few of the suitors surpassed Antilochus, the son of Nestor, King of Pylos, in Messenia—a monarch who, when young, had been one of the mightiest warriors of all Greece, and who now, in his old age, was esteemed the wisest and most eloquent among her sons. Antilochus had inherited the courage and sagacity of his father, and, young though he was, had gained much honour in Hellas. Philoctetes, the Prince of Methone and Melibœa, was held in reverence, because he had been the friend of the great Hercules, and had received from that hero, when dying, the gift of his mighty bow and poison-tipped arrows. Another and yet more celebrated wooer of the fair Helen was Odysseus, or, as he is now more commonly called, Ulysses, the king of the rocky island of Ithaca. He, too, was yet a young man, but was already

famed both for feats of arms and for wisdom, in which he was accounted scarcely inferior to Nestor himself. Last, but not by any means least, among the suitors for the hand of the daughter of Tyndareus was Menelaus, who, as I have already said, was the younger brother of King Agamemnon of Mycenæ. He was a prince of noble stature and comely aspect; courageous, and skilled in arms; exceedingly fond of the chase, and little given, perhaps, to those lighter graces and arts which are said to find favour in the eyes of fair ladies. But he loved Helen ardently; and the haughty maiden, conscious, as she could not help being, of her beauty, and accustomed to the admiration of so many heroes and princes, esteemed Menelaus none the less because he was himself too proud to be the slave of all her caprices.

Amid so many rival claimants for his daughter, King Tyndareus, as he well might be, was puzzled as to what he should do. The presence of these chieftains, each with his train of followers, at the court of Sparta was a burden to that state, and an evil to the kingdoms whose rulers had thus deserted them. It was clear that only one of the suitors could go away contented; yet it would be dangerous, and might be positively ruinous, to offend all the others. Tyndareus had already, in his secret mind, made his choice of the man to whom Helen should be given; but he did not know how to prevent evil consequences, and perhaps the outbreak of a cruel war, when that choice should be proclaimed. In his perplexity, the King of Sparta took counsel with Ulysses, whom he knew to be the most crafty of all the suitors. The Prince of Ithaca, perhaps hoping that to be thus consulted by Tyndareus was a sign that he was most in favour, was ready

enough to give his advice. He proposed that Tyndareus should call together the suitors; make them all solemnly swear to abide by his decision, and to assist and defend the successful wooer with all their power in any feud that might arise in consequence of the marriage; and then announce his choice. The plan seemed to Tyndareus to be an excellent one. Accordingly all the candidates were summoned, and asked to take such an oath as Ulysses had suggested. Each one hoped that he would be the chosen bridegroom, and so each was ready to make the required promise. Then Tyndareus announced that he would give his daughter to Menelaus; and as that prince was without a throne, and he himself was old and weary of the cares of government, he would resign to him the kingdom of Sparta.

Of course all the rest of the suitors were bitterly disappointed. But they had sworn to respect and to uphold Tyndareus' decision. Moreover, Menelaus was an illustrious prince, a member of a great though unfortunate house, and his brother was the ruler of the most powerful state in Hellas. There was nothing for it but to submit. So Menelaus was solemnly crowned King of Sparta; his marriage with the beautiful Helen was celebrated with due pomp; and the other princes returned to their own dominions, or sought relief for their disappointment in warlike adventures. In the course of the next few years most of them consoled themselves by choosing wives in their turn, and Menelaus and Helen reigned at Sparta happily enough.

It seemed as though the oath so cunningly devised by Ulysses and exacted from all the suitors would never need to be fulfilled. But the peace and prosperity which at that time prevailed

throughout Greece were but the lull preceding a terrible storm. Helen, as I have said, was the fairest woman in the world, and such a woman had Venus promised to give to Paris for his wife. The fulfilment of that promise was now at hand, and it was destined to work unutterable ills for Greece and Troy alike.

You will remember that when the great Hercules conquered and slew Laomedon, he carried off with him from Troy the king's daughter Hesione, whom he had saved from the jaws of the sea-monster sent by Neptune, and gave her in marriage to his friend Telamon, who was Prince of Salamis. Telamon was now dead, and in his stead there ruled at Salamis his son by another wife—a prince named Ajax, a giant in stature, a man of great courage, and esteemed at that time as the greatest warrior in all Greece. But Hesione still lived in the city over which her step-son was king—a lonely exile, far from the native country from which she had been so rudely dragged. Her brother, King Priam, had always borne in mind how by her tears and entreaties she had induced Hercules to spare his life and make him King of Troy in his father's place. He was not a warlike monarch, but he felt it to be a dishonour that the sister of the ruler of so powerful a state as Troy should be allowed to languish a captive on a foreign shore. Now that her husband was dead, he determined to send an embassy to Salamis to demand that Hesione should be restored to him. It was only natural that he should have chosen as the head of this embassy his eldest son, Hector, whose fame as a warrior was already widely spread, and whose suit was therefore the more likely to receive attention. But Paris, who was eager to make the best of his new-found rank by seeing something of

other countries, implored that the business should be intrusted to him; and Aphrodite by her divine power inclined the king to grant the prayer of the handsome son who was the delight of his old age, and to whom, indeed, he could scarce deny anything. So a fleet of ships, manned by many warriors, was gathered on the Trojan coast; much treasure was placed on board, to enable Paris to support worthily his character as the representative of the King of Troy, and the young prince set sail, full of bright hopes and eager anticipations. As he was entering his ship, his sister Cassandra came to him, and warned him not to bring home a wife from Greece, for if he did so he would bring ruin upon his country. But he took no heed of the warning, and indeed Cassandra herself well knew that it would be vain.

In these days of steam-ships and skilful navigation, the voyage across the Ægean Sea is but a matter of a few hours. But in that early time such a journey was looked upon as most formidable, and full of perils. In their light barks, no larger than a good-sized whale-boat, the Greek and Trojan navigators never dared to venture, in the most propitious weather, out of sight of the land; and if by chance an unexpected wind carried them into the open sea, they gave themselves up for lost. The voyage to Greece occupied Paris and his companions for some weeks, but the breezes were always gentle and favourable, and the brightness of the sky above was never overcast; for Aphrodite, always present though invisible, cast the mantle of her protection over the voyagers. Through her guidance it was that the fleet, instead of reaching Salamis, anchored at last in the harbour of Sparta, where dwelt King Menelaus with his beautiful wife.

The people of the little city crowded about the princely and beautiful stranger when he landed with his companions, and conducted them to the palace. In no city of Greece were the rites of hospitality more splendidly fulfilled than in Sparta, whose king, frank and open-hearted, possessed wealth sufficient to give to his guests treatment as noble as his generosity prompted. When the Trojan prince entered Menelaus' hall he was received with honour and attention that filled his vain-glorious heart with pride. Even before he had proclaimed his name and his errand, he was invited to sit beside the king; and as soon as he had made known who he was and wherefore he had landed on Grecian soil, Menelaus repeated his greeting, entreated him to stay a while at Sparta, and promised to use afterwards all his influence to bring about the success of the mission which the son of King Priam was charged to accomplish at Salamis. Paris would in any case have accepted an invitation that promised him so much of pleasure; for he had not yet lost any of his ardour for the chase, and the fame of King Menelaus as a mighty hunter had extended even to Troy. But while the hospitable king was urging his request, the beautiful Helen—attracted by the report brought by her maids of the arrival of a handsome stranger—entered the hall. The spectacle of her radiant charms conquered the heart of Paris in a moment. He felt that the only thing worth living for was to remain in the society of a woman so far excelling in beauty any other mortal that he had ever seen. He consented to remain at Sparta as long as his royal host should desire.

That same day Menelaus held a great banquet in his palace in

honour of his guest's arrival; and on this occasion Paris did his utmost to please both the king and the queen. There was an Oriental and languid grace in his manners which delighted Helen, and was not without its charm even for the king—perhaps because of its contrast with the demeanour of the rough hunters and stern warriors who were his usual companions. The Trojan prince caused the rich treasures from his ships to be brought to the palace, and with lavish hand bestowed gifts on his royal hosts. To the king he gave a suit of armour inlaid with gold, and a massy spear with blade of unequalled keenness and shaft of curiously carved ivory; while on Helen he bestowed ornaments made of solid gold and shining with precious stones. The next day he completed his conquest of the regard of Menelaus by displaying, when accompanying him in the chase, an agility and courage not inferior to his own. Thenceforward the king was never weary of the company of the handsome foreign prince, while the queen took a pleasure in his society that was perhaps still more intense, if it was not so openly confessed.

Days and weeks passed by, and still Paris remained at the court of Sparta. He thought no more of his mission to Salamis; or if he did, it was with impatience and disgust. He understood now well enough why it was that his ships had been brought into that harbour. Helen was the most beautiful woman in the world. Aphrodite had promised that she should be his, and all his desire was to bring about the fulfilment of the promise.

The opportunity presented itself at last. A messenger came to King Menelaus from his former rival, but always his friend, Idomeneus of Crete. That monarch had planned a great hunting

expedition in the interior of his kingdom, and he besought Menelaus to join him. The King of Sparta, unsuspicious of the evil that was being plotted against him by the guest he had treated so royally, determined to accept the invitation. He departed accordingly, after having laid his commands on his queen to entertain Paris worthily in his absence—a command which Helen was no-wise loath to obey. But as soon as the king's sails had sunk below the horizon, the Trojan prince announced that the time had come for his own departure. Then for the first time Helen learned how dear he had become to her. She made no effort to disguise her sorrow; she implored him to remain yet a little longer. And now he in his turn became a suppliant. He avowed his love for her; he declared that it was the will of Aphrodite that she should become his wife; and he begged her to fly with him to Troy, where she would be secure from the wrath of Menelaus, and would be treated with all the honour to which her rank and her beauty entitled her. Not at once did Helen yield to these solicitations; but when day after day they were repeated, while Paris pushed forward his preparations for departure, the weak woman gave way. She consented to accompany him. In the dead of night the perfidious Trojan led her to his ships, taking with him also as much as he could of the treasure stored in the royal palace; and when next morning the slaves of King Menelaus discovered the absence of their queen, she and Paris were far away on the homeward journey to Troy.

Great were the grief and shame and anger of the Spartans when they learned of the wrong done to their king. Without

loss of time messengers were sent to Crete to acquaint him with the fatal news. Burning with wrath, he hastened back to his desolated home. The evil could not be repaired, and Menelaus, in accordance with the custom of his time, now thought only of revenge. The measures he took to obtain it must be told in the next chapter.

CHAPTER IV.

THE LEAGUE AGAINST TROY.

ON his return to Sparta, Menelaus at once hastened to consult with his brother Agamemnon at Mycenæ; and the two monarchs finally determined to go to Pylos, and seek the advice of the venerable Nestor. The old king received them with the honour due to their rank and the friendship he had always maintained with them. Age had neither clouded his mind nor cooled his love of adventure. The strength of Troy, he said, was great; its king had many warriors in his service, and, moreover, he was sure to receive, in any quarrel with the Greeks, the aid of all the other Thracian colonies in Asia. The power of the Atridæ—for so were Agamemnon and Menelaus sometimes called, because they were the sons of Atreus—would not, unaided, be sufficient to obtain satisfaction for the wrong they had sustained. Nestor therefore advised that all the kings and princes of Greece should be asked to join in an alliance against the state whose ambassador had dared to perpetrate an act which was an insult to the whole Hellenic race; and, for his own part, he undertook not only to send his son Antilochus to the war with as large a force as he could raise, but himself to accompany the expedition.

Agamemnon and Menelaus resolved to act according to Nestor's advice, and they sent emissaries to all the kings of Greece, asking them to join in the league against Troy. On all hands their request met with a ready assent. Many of the princes and heroes to whom they applied had been among the suitors who had sworn to King Tyndareus to uphold his choice of a husband for his daughter. Others, who were not under this sacred promise to join in the expedition, nevertheless gladly consented to take part in it: for they saw a prospect of warlike adventure and of the winning of rich spoils; and in those early days of the world war was not looked upon as an evil, but as the most glorious of occupations.

Of all those who had been suitors of Helen, Ulysses alone —the very man who had devised the oath which now bound them to fight in her husband's cause—he alone sought to escape from taking part in the league. He was wise enough to see that a war with Troy would almost certainly be long and perilous. He had only a short time before been married to a fair lady named Penelope, whom he ardently loved, and who had just made him the father of a boy whom he called Telemachus; and he was living very happily in Ithaca, and ruling peacefully over the little kingdom which had now been wholly given up to him by his father Laertes. He was therefore most reluctant to quit his home and set forth on a dangerous enterprise to a foreign land. When first summoned to bring his ships and men to the place appointed for the gathering of the army—the port of Aulis, on the bank of the Euripus, in Bœotia—he returned no answer. Therefore Menelaus and Agamemnon in person came to Ithaca to

remind Ulysses of his oath; for they well knew how great service might be rendered by a man at once so brave in war and so full of craft and eloquence. Learning of their arrival, Ulysses resolved to pretend madness. Wearing his richest garments, he went out into the fields, yoked an ass and an ox together in a plough, and scattered salt on the ground, feigning to believe that it was seed. But for once he was destined to be outwitted. Among the chief followers of Menelaus was a warrior named Palamedes, who was exceedingly shrewd. He believed that the insanity of Ulysses was all pretence; and to prove that it was so, he suddenly took the little Telemachus from the arms of his nurse and placed him before the plough which Ulysses, in such unsuitable attire and with many wild gestures, was driving. The sight of his son's peril made Ulysses in an instant forget his acted madness: he left the plough-handle and sprang forward to save the child, and thus the deception he was trying to practise on the kings became plain. He was now obliged to promise that he would join the league against Troy; and as soon as he had given the promise, he threw himself into the work of preparation with all his energy. Before very long he was able to render to the Greeks an important service.

You will remember the marriage of Peleus, King of Phthia, to the ocean-deity Thetis. The offspring of this marriage was a son named Achilles, who from his very birth seemed to be marked out for greatness. He inherited the divine beauty of his mother, who loved him passionately, and, wishing to make him safe from all the perils which afflict ordinary mortals, took him when a babe to the river Styx, which was believed to encircle the abode

of the dead, below the surface of the earth, and dipped him in its black waters. This process had the effect of making it impossible for any weapon wielded by man to wound any part of his person except only the heel by which Thetis held him, and which she unhappily forgot to plunge also into the stream. The young Achilles was educated with the utmost care, and trained in all manly exercises; and in all of them, while yet a mere boy, he surpassed every one with whom he came in contact.

But when Helen was carried off by Paris, and all Greece began to be stirred with the preparations for war against Troy, Thetis grew alarmed lest the son to whom she was devoted should come to misfortune in the expedition. From the lips of Jupiter himself she learned that Achilles was destined either to lead a long life of inglorious ease, or to die young after achieving great deeds, and that if he took part in the Trojan War it would prove fatal to him. In order to avoid this calamity, Thetis conveyed the boy to Scyros, an island in the Ægean Sea, where, dressed as a girl, he was brought up with the daughters of the king of the island, Lycomedes.

It came to pass, however, that the Greek leaders were anxious to find out the place of Achilles' concealment. At Mycenæ dwelt a certain Calchas, the wisest soothsayer, or interpreter of the future, in all Greece; and he informed the Atridæ, while they were busy with their warlike preparations, that unless Achilles accompanied their expedition, it could not be successful. When they sought the youthful hero in his father's kingdom of Phthia, however, he was not to be found, and King Peleus knew nothing of his whereabouts. On this point not even Calchas knew any-

thing; but Ulysses undertook to discover the secret. By constant search and inquiry, the King of Ithaca traced Achilles to Scyros, and found out that he was living disguised among the daughters of King Lycomedes. So effectual was the disguise, however, that Ulysses, who had never seen the young hero, could not detect him. He therefore resorted to artifice. Putting on the dress of a merchant, he went to the royal palace, and displayed before the eyes of the women of the household some beautiful trinkets and rich articles of attire. All the damsels but one eagerly examined his wares. To make sure that the one who held aloof was the object of his search, the pretended merchant next produced some splendid arms, whereupon the disguised Achilles at once came forward and handled them with evident delight. Certain now that he was correct in his suspicions, Ulysses made himself known, and proclaimed the object of his visit. Achilles, who was thoroughly weary of his new mode of life, joyfully agreed to accompany the other princes on their expedition against Troy. Even when his mother tearfully made known to him the fate that would certainly overtake him, he remained firm in his purpose. He returned to Phthia, whence he led a large body of his father's troops, with his kinsman and friend Patroclus as second in command, to join the rest of the army at Aulis.

Several years had passed after the flight of Paris and Helen before the grand alliance of the Greek princes against Troy was thus completed. But now a larger army than the Hellenes had ever before been able to bring together was gathered along the shores of the Euripus—the long narrow strait between Bœotia and the island of Eubœa. Altogether a hundred thousand

warriors were collected in this spot, while on the waters of the strait lay a thousand vessels, ready to convey this mighty army across the Ægean Sea, to carry destruction and slaughter over the smiling plains of Troy. But though thus prepared for war, the Greek chiefs were not unwilling to try what could be done by peaceful methods; and an embassy, consisting of Menelaus, Ulysses, and a numerous train of followers, was sent to King Priam, to demand the restoration of the fair Helen and the riches taken away with her, and some satisfaction for the insult which, by his faithless act, Paris had offered to all Greece.*

In the meantime it is necessary to see what had become of Paris and his lovely companion. The homeward voyage was by no means so peaceful or prosperous as the journey from Troy to Greece had been. Before the ships had got very far away from Sparta, a violent storm drove them out of their course, and it was not until they had been obliged to run for several days before the raging wind that they were at last able to obtain shelter on the coast of a little island named Cranae. Here the voyagers landed, and found the place so pleasant that for a while they forgot home and all else, and were content to live in one continuous round of luxurious enjoyment. More than three years elapsed before they again set sail; but then, meeting with favourable winds, they soon gained the Trojan coast.

King Priam had well-nigh given up his son for lost, and was so rejoiced at his safe return that he gladly forgave Paris for having so shamefully neglected the object of his mission. Nor,

* According to some of the old writers, this embassy was not sent till after the Greek army had landed on the Trojan shore.

when the young prince brought forward the beautiful Helen, did he hesitate to welcome her as a daughter. There were some among the Trojans who saw that the crime which Paris had committed in carrying off the wife of one of the chief monarchs of Greece would not be allowed to go unrequited, and that in all likelihood it would involve their country in a war with Hellas. Cassandra, especially, lifted up her voice in dire predictions of the calamities that would follow unless Helen were immediately restored to her husband; and though her prophecies, as usual, found no believing listeners, the wise and virtuous Hector spoke out plainly in condemnation of his brother's conduct. The old king and queen, however, were too weakly indulgent to Paris to think of compelling him to give up the bride who, he declared, had been allotted to him by Aphrodite herself: and, besides, Helen's extreme beauty and grace won the hearts of almost all who came near her. So in due course she was married to Paris, with much pomp and popular rejoicing, and thus all hope of a peaceful settlement of the quarrel was banished.

When, therefore, the two royal ambassadors of Greece came to demand the restoration of Helen, and atonement for the wrong which Paris had done to Menelaus, though they were courteously received, King Priam refused to grant what they asked. He was not fond of war, as I have said; but he had confidence in the strength of his god-built ramparts and in the might of his warriors, and for once in his life he turned a deaf ear to the wise counsellors who told him that what the ambassadors demanded was only just. Ulysses and Menelaus had to return to Greece with a reply which made the war inevitable.

And now at Aulis all was stir and bustle. Day after day the long lines of tents on the shore became fewer and fewer as the warriors went on board their ships. Agamemnon, in virtue of his acknowledged position as the most powerful monarch in Greece, was chosen leader of the expedition, and under him were a formidable band of kings and chiefs. There was Menelaus, stern and silent under the recollection of the cruel wrong he had endured, but yet bearing himself as a brave man should. There was the young Achilles, bright and beautiful as a god, with golden hair that fell over his shoulders, full of warlike ardour, and longing to prove his mighty strength against the warriors of Troy. There was the huge Ajax, slow in thought and speech and cumbrous in his motions, but gifted with almost matchless prowess, and with a courage that no danger could shake. There was another Ajax, the son of Oileus, King of the Locrians, who led a large contingent of his father's troops. He was also one of the most famous warriors of all Greece. Small in stature, he was nevertheless endowed with great activity, skilled in throwing the spear, and accounted, next only to Achilles, as the swiftest-footed of all the Hellenes. There was the venerable Nestor, active yet notwithstanding his years and the snowy beard that descended to his waist, full of wisdom, and so skilled in the arts of oratory that he was often called "honey-tongued." There was his son Antilochus, a stalwart and impetuous warrior. There was the stately Diomedes, and the King of Crete, who was eager to revenge the injury done to his friend Menelaus, and had brought from his rich and populous island-kingdom a formidable array of ships and men. There was Philoctetes, the companion of the

great Hercules in many a daring adventure, who wielded the mighty bow of the dead hero, and carried in his quiver the arrows which could give with their envenomed tips a wound that mortal skill could not heal. There was Ulysses, mighty of limb and skilled in arms, his deep eyes shining with a wisdom so profound that all men believed him to be under the special guidance of the great goddess Minerva. From all the kingdoms of Greece and from the islands that dotted the blue Mediterranean came their princes and their warriors. With such leaders and so mighty an armament, who could doubt that an enterprise undertaken in so just a cause must be successful?

When the hour of departure was at hand, and few besides the chiefs were left on shore, an altar was raised, and solemn sacrifices were offered to the gods. While this ceremony was taking place, a serpent was seen to come out of the ground and ascend a plane-tree that grew near. On this tree was a bird's nest containing some young. These the serpent devoured, and afterwards the mother bird; but immediately afterwards a flash of dazzling light descended from the heavens, and when the spectators again raised their eyes to the tree, lo! the serpent was turned to stone. The kings turned to the soothsayer Calchas, and demanded of him to explain the meaning of this wonderful event; whereupon he interpreted it to signify that the war against Troy would last for nine years, but that the city would be taken in the tenth. Thus, with the prospect before them of a long and weary struggle, but of victory to reward them at its close, that mighty armament set sail for Troy.

CHAPTER V.

THE BEGINNING OF THE WAR.

CROSSING the Ægean Sea under the influence of a favourable westerly wind, the fleet of the Greeks, after a voyage unusually short, came in sight of the Asiatic shore, and there beheld a large city, which they supposed to be Troy itself. Without delay the ships were beached, the warriors poured out of them like a swarm of bees, and—each band headed by their own leader—marched against the town. Very little resistance was attempted by the astonished people; and it was not until they had committed much slaughter and destruction that the Hellenes learned the error into which they had fallen. They had, in fact, arrived at a point on the coast several miles south of the Trojan borders, and had captured the city of Teuthrania, in the kingdom of Mysia. Over this country there reigned at that time a king named Telephus, who was a son of the great Hercules, and himself a skilled warrior. As soon as he heard of the outrage that the Greeks had, without any cause, committed on his city and people, he gathered his troops, and attacking them suddenly, drove them to their ships. Not even the valour of Achilles could prevent this defeat; and Telephus

inflicted a severe wound on the hero's dearest friend, Patroclus, but received one himself in return from the spear of Achilles. Rather crest-fallen, the Hellenic fleet bore back for Aulis, but suffered severely on the return journey from a tempest, and it was some time before all the ships were again gathered at their anchorage. In the meantime King Telephus had found his wound incurable, and had been told by a soothsayer that it could not be healed except by the hand of him who gave it. The king therefore came to the Greek camp, where Achilles, who had been taught surgery by Chiron, a famous centaur, managed to cure him. In return for this service Telephus agreed to guide the fleet to the coast of Troy; and once more the armament was on the point of setting sail, when an unfortunate incident occurred to cause fresh delay.

While their ships had been returning to port, some of the chiefs who had arrived first at Aulis had diverted themselves with the chase in the neighbouring country; and one day, while thus engaged, King Agamemnon pursued a deer into a grove dedicated to Diana, and slew it on the sacred ground. The angry goddess, to punish the king, caused the wind to blow persistently, day after day and week after week, in the wrong direction. The sails flapped idly against the masts of the ships; and the mariners, who were powerless against a contrary breeze, could do nothing but address to the gods prayers, which remained unheeded, for a favourable one. At last the chiefs consulted Calchas, who, after offering sacrifices and examining the auguries, told them that the easterly winds were sent by Diana because of the manner in which Agamemnon had desecrated her grove; and that the only means

by which she could be appeased was the sacrifice of the king's eldest daughter, the beautiful Iphigenia.

When Agamemnon heard this cruel announcement he was overwhelmed with grief. He declared that rather than consent to the death of his best-loved child he would give up all share in the expedition and return to Mycenæ. But the soothsayer coldly warned him that not by thus abandoning his great charge as the head and leader of the Hellenic league could he hope to atone for the offence he had committed; and that Artemis (as Diana was called by the Greeks) would surely wreak her vengeance upon him if he did not submit to the penalty she required. The other princes, moreover, told him that if he were to withdraw from their enterprise others would soon follow his example, the league would speedily be dissolved, and the dire insult inflicted by the Trojan prince on the King of Sparta and on all Greece would remain unavenged. Thus pressed, the unhappy Agamemnon gave way, and consented that his daughter should be offered up in sacrifice to the stern goddess of the chase.

But Iphigenia, who was in the first bloom of womanhood, was living peacefully with her mother Clytemnestra at Mycenæ, in happy ignorance of the terrible doom that awaited her. It was certain that if Clytemnestra were to learn what was to be the fate of her daughter, she would refuse to give her up. The messengers sent to bring Iphigenia to the camp were therefore instructed to tell the queen that she had been chosen as a wife by Achilles, and that it was desirable to perform the marriage ceremony before the fleet should again set sail for Troy. The deception succeeded. Clytemnestra, overjoyed at the prospect of so

brilliant an alliance for her daughter, hastened her departure. Filled with bright hopes the maiden reached the camp; but she was received there with none of the signs of rejoicing that she might have expected. She was led to the tent of her father, and there learned that she was doomed to die in the glow of her youth and beauty, in expiation of the offence committed by another. In vain did she throw herself with tears and supplications at Agamemnon's feet. He dared not resist what he believed to be the will of the goddess; and even if he had been willing to do so, the other leaders of the expedition were resolved that their enterprise should not be ruined in order to save the life of one woman, princess though she might be.

The next day an altar was erected upon the shore; all the Greek army was gathered to witness the atonement offered by its leader to the offended deity; and the unfortunate Iphigenia was led, pale and weeping, to the place of sacrifice. She had been placed bound upon the altar, and the knife of the priest was uplifted to pierce her bared bosom, when suddenly the altar and victim were hidden in a cloud that descended from the skies; and when, in a few moments, it melted away, Iphigenia had disappeared, and in her place lay a milk-white fawn. It was Artemis herself who, conquered by pity for the trembling maiden, wrought this miracle. She carried off Iphigenia to the country of the Taurians, a wild and savage people who dwelt in the region afterwards called the Chersonese, and who paid special veneration to Artemis. There Iphigenia long remained as priestess in the temple of the goddess, nor was it till many years afterwards that she again saw her native land.

The wrath of Artemis was appeased, though at a cost greater than Agamemnon himself knew of. Once more the wind blew fair for the Trojan coast; once more the mighty armament of the Hellenes quitted the narrow waters of the Euripus, with white sails bellying in the breeze and sharp prows that cleft through the foaming waves; and this time, skilfully piloted by King Telephus, they reached their proper destination. When, however, the fleet arrived off the coast, within sight of the lofty ramparts of Troy, the warriors of King Priam, headed by Hector, stood ready to oppose the landing of the invaders; and none of the Greek chiefs were eager to lead the disembarkation, for an oracle had predicted that the first who set foot on the Trojan soil would certainly perish. With noble courage and self-sacrifice, Protesilaus, King of Phylace in Thessaly, at last sprung on shore, quickly followed by his own and other warriors. He himself, after striking down many of the enemy, fell by the hand of Hector; but his heroic example had inspired the Hellenes, and after a sharp struggle, the Trojans were driven in confusion behind their sheltering walls.

Eager to make the most of this first success, the Greeks immediately advanced, under the leadership of Achilles, and endeavoured to take the city by storm; but though they fought with the utmost determination and performed prodigies of valour, they found it impossible to force the gates or make their way over the ramparts, and were at last obliged to fall back to the shore. It was thus evident that Troy could only be captured by a regular siege; for which the invaders immediately began to make preparation. Their ships were drawn up on the beach; in front of them huts

were erected to give shelter to the troops; and rude fortifications were thrown up all round the camp. It was while these labours were being carried to completion that Ulysses, who had neither forgotten nor forgiven the manner in which Palamedes had obliged him to join the expedition, carried out a cruel and treacherous revenge against that brave chief. He concealed in Palamedes' tent a large treasure of gold, and then produced in a council of the leaders of the army a letter which he pretended to have taken from the person of a Trojan prisoner. This letter appeared to be from King Priam to Palamedes. It thanked him for the intelligence which he had supplied respecting the movements and designs of the Greeks, and mentioned the money which had been sent him as a reward, promising still larger sums in exchange for further services. When this letter had been read aloud before the princes, Ulysses proposed that the tent of Palamedes should be searched. The treasure which had been hidden there was of course discovered. No doubt remained as to the treachery of Palamedes in the mind of any of his companions. He was unanimously condemned to suffer death; and as he perceived that it would be impossible for him to prove his innocence, he made no attempt to avert his doom. He was accordingly stoned to death in the presence of the army. The man who contrived this shameful deed was one of the greatest and most revered among all the heroes of Greece, and was believed to be under the special protection of the gods. How strange must have been the notions of the Hellenes respecting deities who, in their belief, could show favour to the perpetrator of so disgraceful a crime!

Almost at the same time the Hellenes lost the services of

another of their greatest warriors, Philoctetes. It happened that one day an arrow which he had drawn from his quiver fell upon his foot, and its envenomed point inflicted a wound which, though it did not prove fatal, became so offensive that his presence in the camp could no longer be endured. He was accordingly conveyed to the desolate island of Lemnos, and there cruelly deserted. In

Philoctetes lying wounded in Lemnos.

this miserable exile he was destined to remain for many years, enduring terrible anguish.

For a long time the war dragged along without any event of great moment happening to either party in the strife. The Greeks having proved at a heavy cost their inability to storm the walls of Troy, made no further attempts to do so; while the Trojans

were aware that they could not successfully encounter the enemy in the open field, and so remained shut up behind their ramparts, hoping that the invaders would at last weary of their enterprise.

But though the Greeks were not able to do anything against Troy, they were by no means unoccupied. From their fortified camp they sent forth expeditions which ravaged all the surrounding country. Towns and villages were captured, their male population put to the sword, and their riches and their women carried off, after the cruel fashion of those times, by the victors. In these enterprises Achilles especially distinguished himself. The young hero, full of warlike ardour, was never weary of encountering the perils of the battle-field. Wherever he led, the Greeks were invariably victorious, and no warrior could withstand the might of his arm. But one of his triumphs was destined to work terrible calamities for the Hellenes, and bitter sorrow for himself.

It was about the close of the ninth year since the Greek fleet had first set sail from Aulis that Achilles with the troops he led stormed and took the town of Pedasus, which stood on the inland slope of Mount Ida, some miles distant from Troy. Among the spoils were two fair maidens, Briseis, the daughter of a warrior named Briseus; and Chryseis, the only child of Chryses, a priest of Apollo. The former of these was allotted as a slave to Achilles, the latter to Agamemnon. But the bereaved father of Chryseis erelong came to the Greek camp and, offering rich gifts, implored that he might be allowed to ransom his daughter. Softened by the spectacle of his age and his sorrow, the other chiefs would have assented to his prayer; but the haughty King of Mycenæ would not give up his captive, and drove Chryses from the camp

with fierce threats. The priest, full of wrath, entreated Apollo, whom he had served all his life with faithful piety, to punish the wrong-doers:—

> "If e'er with wreaths I hung thy sacred fane,
> Or fed the flames with fat of oxen slain,
> God of the silver bow! thy shafts employ,
> Avenge thy servant, and the Greeks destroy."

His prayer did not pass unheard. The god of light, always ready, like his sister, to punish any insult to his name or to his servants, visited the Greek camp with a terrible pestilence. For nine days the warriors died by hundreds, and the smoke of the funeral pyres that were incessantly burning darkened the heavens above the camp. On the tenth day, seeing that the destruction continued unabated, Achilles summoned the leaders of the army to a solemn council.

CHAPTER VI.

THE QUARREL BETWIXT ACHILLES AND AGAMEMNON.

AN thus calling together the chiefs and princes, Achilles was carrying out a thought put into his mind by Juno. It will be remembered that Paris, by giving the golden apple to Venus, had bitterly wounded the pride of the haughty queen of heaven, and of one who was perhaps a still more dangerous enemy—Minerva, the favourite daughter of Zeus, and the goddess of wisdom. The enmity which the two deities felt toward the young shepherd-prince they had now extended to his nation; and it was a hate which nothing but the destruction of Troy could satisfy.

When, therefore, Juno beheld the Greeks perishing under the deadly plague sent by Apollo, she was sorely grieved. She could not step between the sun-god and his victims, but she was eager that his wrath should be appeased; and in order to accomplish that purpose, she prompted Achilles to call the kings together to consult as to the means of staying the affliction by which the army was visited.

When all the leaders were assembled, Achilles rose, and turning to Agamemnon, as the chief of them all—"Why," said he, "do we

remain in this fatal spot inactive? Rather than that all our warriors should perish so ingloriously, as many have done during the last few days, it would surely be better to abandon our enterprise altogether, and sail back, all that are left of us, to Greece. But first, is there no one who can tell us the cause of this calamity? Have we unwittingly offended some one of the immortals, who is thus punishing us?"

He looked, as he spoke, at Calchas, who, as the wisest soothsayer in Greece, was always present at the councils of the chiefs. Nor was Calchas slow to answer.

"If, Achilles," he said, "you would learn why the pestilence has fallen upon us, first promise me your protection; for what I have to say may enrage those who are mightier than I."

At once the hero gave the required pledge; and then the soothsayer announced that the plague had been sent by Apollo, in answer to the prayer of Chryses; nor could it be stayed until the fair daughter of the priest should have been restored to him without ransom. Full of wrath, Agamemnon at once started to his feet.

"For me," he cried, "thou hast ever been a prophet of evil! Am I to be charged with having brought this disaster on our camp because I chose to keep the captive awarded me, and to refuse the ransom that was offered me? Yet, if you speak that which is the will of the gods, let the maid go. For the sake of my people I will yield my own desires; but then another slave must be given to me in place of the one I lose."

Between Agamemnon and Achilles there had already been more than one difference. The son of Thetis, knowing his superior might and skill in arms, and exceedingly proud, could little

endure the authority which had been conferred on the King of Mycenæ, not because of his prowess in the field, but because of the extent of his dominions and the number of his followers. Now, in fiery language, he complained of the greed of the monarch who would rob his comrades of their well-earned booty, because the gods would not permit him to retain his own.

"Be content," said he, "to wait till Troy is ours, and then you shall be satisfied from its spoils."

"Think you," returned Agamemnon, "that I will tamely yield up my prize and leave you possessed of yours? Chryseis shall be restored to her father, since Apollo and Calchas will have it so; but either a just equivalent shall be given to me, or I will take from you the captive you now hold in your tent."

"Proud and insolent tyrant!" fiercely answered Achilles, "why should I fight under your banner? The Trojans never injured me. I and my warriors have come from distant Phthia to avenge your brother's wrong, not ours. But know that I will no longer be your slave. I will return to Thessaly, and then it will be seen what spoils will fall to your share when Achilles is no longer here to win them."

"Begone, if it so pleases you," returned Agamemnon. "There will still be no lack of chiefs and warriors to fight under my command. Among your Myrmidons" (for so were the troops of Phthia named) "you may threaten and rage as you will; but here I am master: and I tell you again that though I will restore Chryseis to her father, Briseis shall take her place. If you resist, you shall quickly learn how much greater is my power than yours."

Thus imperiously accosted, Achilles was well-nigh beside himself with wrath. Instinctively his hand sought his sword, and a terrible scene of strife might have ensued. But interference came from an unexpected quarter. High on Olympus, Juno and Minerva had watched with dismay the outbreak of this sudden quarrel between the two foremost leaders of the Greeks; and now Minerva descended with lightning speed, and hidden by a cloud

Minerva repressing the Fury of Achilles.

from the rest of the princes, she grasped Achilles by the golden hair that fell down his shoulders. He turned, and at once recognized the goddess.

"Dost thou, O Minerva!" he exclaimed, "come to witness the insult offered me by the proud son of Atreus? Thou shalt also witness the vengeance I will take for it."

And his bright blade was half drawn from the sheath, when Minerva spoke, in a voice that was heard by him alone.

"Forbear, O son of Thetis!" she said. "Taunt the king with keen reproaches, if you will; but lift not your arm against him, nor oppose the purpose he has declared. This is the command of Juno; but I promise thee that the hour will come when the proud Agamemnon shall humble himself before thee, and seek thy aid with boundless treasures."

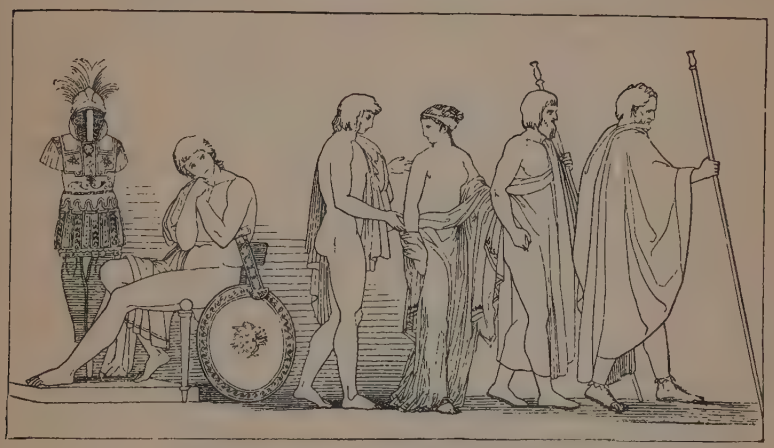
I obey," answered Achilles. "At thy bidding, goddess, I forbear my vengeance." Then, as Minerva sped away to Olympus, he turned to Agamemnon, and loading him with scornful epithets, swore by the sceptre he held—a sacred oath among the Hellenes—that when the routed Greeks should come to him for aid, they should implore in vain. The venerable Nestor now strove with soothing words to heal the quarrel. But Agamemnon announced his fixed purpose of seizing on Briseis; and Achilles retorted that since the army which had adjudged the fair captive to him was willing to see him bereft of her, he would not defend her.

> "The gods command me to forgive the past:
> But let this first invasion be the last;
> For know, thy blood, when next thou dar'st invade,
> Shall stream in vengeance on my reeking blade."

Thus the council ended in bitter dissension. Achilles retired in sullen wrath to his tent; whither, after having first despatched Ulysses in a swift vessel to restore Chryseis to her father, and to offer up propitiatory sacrifices to Apollo, Agamemnon sent two heralds to demand the surrender of Briseis. Achilles gave the

reluctant maid into their hands, but repeated to them his vow that henceforward he would leave the insolent King of Mycenæ to fight his own battles.

Ulysses fulfilled the task imposed upon him by Agamemnon, and carried back the fair Chryseis, cause of all the calamities that had spread dismay through the Hellenic camp, to the loving arms of her father. Thus consoled, Chryses implored Apollo to



The Departure of Briseis from the Tent of Achilles.

visit the Greeks no more with his wrath, and the god of light complied with the petition.

Achilles, in the meantime, had retired alone to the sea-shore to brood over his wrongs, and there he passionately appealed to his mother to come to him. Far down in the caves of ocean, where she dwelt with her sister Nereids, Thetis heard the cry of her son. In another moment she rose from the waves, bright and

beautiful in her immortality as when she first became the bride of Peleus, and asked Achilles the cause of his sorrow. He told her the story of the outrage done him by Agamemnon, and entreated her to implore Zeus to avenge him, reminding her that she had aided the king of the gods when he was waging war against Saturn, bringing the huge Briareus to his help, and that he ought therefore to respond readily to her prayer.

Achilles and Thetis on the Sea-shore.

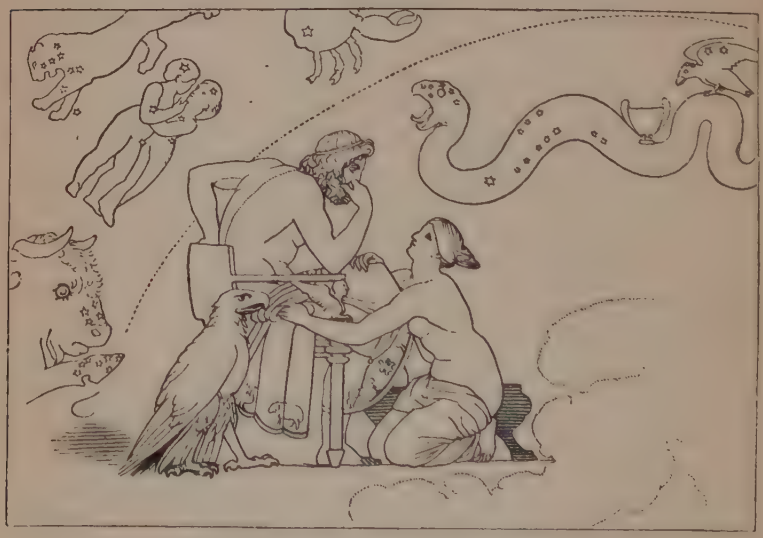
Grieving bitterly for her son's affliction, Thetis promised to do as he asked her. "Jove," she said to him, "has gone to Ethiopia to visit the blameless king of that distant land. On the twelfth day he will return, and then I will proceed to Olympus and implore him on thy behalf."

Having thus consoled Achilles, Thetis returned to the depths of ocean. But on the twelfth day, as she had promised, she arose from the sea and flew to Olympus. There she found the mighty ruler of gods and men seated alone in awful majesty, high above all the other deities, on the very summit of the mountain. Bending before him, and grasping his knees in the guise of a suppliant,

Thetis calling Briareus to the Assistance of Jupiter.

the goddess implored him, for the sake of the service she had rendered in time past, to avenge the injury sustained by her son, and humble by disaster the haughty ruler of the Greeks. At first Zeus returned no answer to her entreaties; but when, with redoubled passion, she repeated them, he promised to do what she

asked, though complaining that he should thus be dragged into the petty strife of mortals. Comforted by his promise, Thetis quitted Olympus; and Jupiter descended from his lofty seat to feast with the other deities in the shining halls of the palace, where, stretched on golden couches around the table, they awaited his arrival. As he entered, all rose, and remained in respectful



Thetis entreating Jupiter to honour Achilles.

silence; but this did not long remain unbroken. Juno had observed the visit of Thetis to her spouse, and she was fearful that it foreboded evil to the Greeks. Eagerly she inquired what new project the lord of heaven was meditating which he thought fit to keep secret from his queen.

"Seek not," sternly replied Zeus, "to penetrate the secret resolves of my mind. What it is fit to make known, thou shalt know first of all; but as to what I do not choose to reveal, ask no further."

"Wherefore this anger?" exclaimed Juno. "I think not of disputing thy supreme will. It is not for my own privileges that I fear, but for Greece. I saw Thetis entreating thee, and to her thou canst refuse nothing.

> "What fatal favour has the goddess won
> To grace her fierce, inexorable son?
> Perhaps in Grecian blood to drench the plain,
> And glut his vengeance with my people slain."

Very wrathfully answered Jove: "Vain are thy presumptuous questions, and to me altogether hateful. Know that what I have decreed is unchangeable, and beware lest by further interference thou draw down my anger on thy head."

Trembling with fear at the stern tones of her lord, the abashed goddess cast down her eyes. The joy of the feast was clouded, till the lame Vulcan, grieved to see this dissension betwixt his parents, exclaimed,—

"Why, O greatest of immortals, should you permit the wretched quarrels of mankind to disturb your harmony? Goddess," he continued, turning to Juno, "submit to the will of my sire, lest in his wrath he put forth his matchless might against you, and hurl you from these blest abodes, as once he hurled me when in your cause I strove against him. Obey him, and once again he will smile upon you."

Then, in his desire to restore mirth to the feast, the ungainly god usurped the place of Ganymede, Jove's cup-bearer. He poured out in golden bowls the delicious nectar, which was the drink of the immortals, and hobbling with one of them to Juno's side, handed it to the goddess, who, with a smile, extended her white arm to receive it. At the spectacle of Vulcan acting as cup-bearer, Jove and all the other deities were convulsed with inextinguishable laughter; and then, amid mirth and the exquisite music that Apollo brought forth from his lyre, the gods feasted till the close of the day.

CHAPTER VII.

THE COMBAT OF MENELAUS AND PARIS.

THAT same night Jupiter, mindful of his promise to Thetis, sent a deceitful phantom, which appeared to Agamemnon in his sleep, in the form of the venerable Nestor, and bade him, in the name of Zeus, arise and forthwith lead his warriors against Troy, which was now fated to fall before his arms. I have already told you how much faith in those days was placed in dreams. Awakened by his pleasing vision, the King of Mycenæ hastily rose, threw on his garments, buckled his sword to his side, and proceeded to the tent of Nestor, where, having summoned the other chiefs to a conference, he repeated to them the words of the phantom. All were agreed that the mandate sent, as they believed, from the lord of heaven should be obeyed; but Agamemnon proposed that in order to try the spirit of the troops, worn by nine years of combat, he should propose a return of the expedition to Greece, and that the other leaders should restrain the men if they agreed to the proposal. The experiment was tried. The whole army—save only the Myrmidons, who, with their haughty leader, remained gloomily in their tents —was gathered on the shore; and then Agamemnon delivered a

speech, in which he declared that it was evident that Troy could not be captured, and that therefore it would be best to retreat while flight could be safely accomplished.

The proposal sounded very agreeable to the warriors, tired of their long exile from their homes and their families. At once

Jupiter sending the Phantom to Agamemnon.

they hurried to the beach, and began to prepare for departure. But at this spectacle, which she witnessed from the heights of Olympus, Juno was overwhelmed with grief and rage, and she entreated Minerva to hasten to the Grecian camp and prevent the meditated flight. The goddess obeyed, sought out Ulysses—who was standing in sorrowful silence watching the movements of

the troops — and bade him raise his voice against the shameful retreat that was proposed. Recognizing the voice of the goddess, Ulysses complied with her commands. He hurried to and fro among the crowd of warriors: to the leaders he uttered words of warlike ardour and encouragement, and when the common men showed a disposition to resist him, he checked them

Agamemnon and the Vision.

with stern reproof or heavy blows. When a certain malicious hump-back named Thersites, notorious for his coarse wit and railing tongue, poured forth a torrent of reproach and abuse against Agamemnon, the King of Ithaca, in generous wrath, answered in terms of fiery rebuke, and smote him so heavily with his sceptre that the writhing coward wept and begged for mercy.

Silence and order having been restored, Ulysses delivered a speech, in which he eloquently depicted the shame that would for ever attach to the Hellenic name if the enterprise were abandoned, and predicted certain victory if it were persevered in. His eloquence completely changed the sentiment of the troops: they became full of eagerness for battle; and this feeling was intensified when, by the advice of Nestor, Agamemnon ordered a muster and review of the army. Each band was ranged in grim array under its own leader; and so vast was the number, that they occupied all the spacious plain before Troy.

On their side the Trojans, perceiving from their ramparts the martial preparations of their foes, got ready also for battle. Under the direction of the mighty Hector, their forces were ranged in order. The prince himself commanded the warriors of King Priam. The troops sent by Anchises, king of the neighbouring state of Dardania, were under the leadership of his son Æneas, a warrior of great renown and of immortal birth, for Aphrodite herself was his mother; while the commanders under him were Archilochus and Acamas. Zeleia, a city of Mysia, had sent a strong force under Pandarus, who had been taught the use of the bow by Apollo, and was the best archer in the Trojan army. Pityea, another city in the same district, ruled by a soothsayer named Merops, lent a contingent under his two sons, Amphius and Adrastus. A chief named Asius led the troops of Sestos and Abydos, two towns on the Hellespont which owned the sway of King Priam. Two celebrated warriors, Hippothous and Pyleus, commanded the fierce Pelasgian soldiery from Larissa; and Acamus and Pyrous were the chiefs of a formidable band of

hardy warriors from distant Thracia. The Pœonian bowmen under Pyrechmus, the Paphlagonians under Pylæmenes, the Mysians under Chromis and Ennomus, the Phrygians led by Phorcis and Ascanius, and many more, were in the motley host that had assembled under the banner of Troy. Two great warrior-princes, Glaucus and Sarpedon—the latter a son of Zeus —commanded a body of allies from Lycia.

Such was the mighty army that now poured out from the gates of Troy and confronted the warriors of Greece on the open plain. In the forefront of the Trojan ranks strode Paris; noble of aspect as when he first stole Helen's love from her rightful lord, he wore over his glittering armour the spotted hide of a panther. Over his shoulder was slung his bow; while in his hands he brandished two gleaming spears, and haughtily challenged the boldest of the Greeks to combat. The challenge did not long go unanswered. As Paris stalked disdainfully to and fro, he was perceived by Menelaus. At the sight of the man who had so cruelly wronged him, the King of Sparta panted with fierce delight, and sprang from his chariot to attack him. But when Paris beheld this stern warrior-chief approaching, his boldness changed to fear, and he shrank back behind the bristling spears of the Trojan troops. His flight was seen by Hector, whom it filled with scorn and anger.

"Unhappy Paris!" he cried, "art thou then only brave to women? Was it in this fashion that Helen was wooed and won? What is the worth of your youth and beauty against the courage of the prince you have wronged?"

"Ah, brother!" answered Paris, "your reproaches are just;

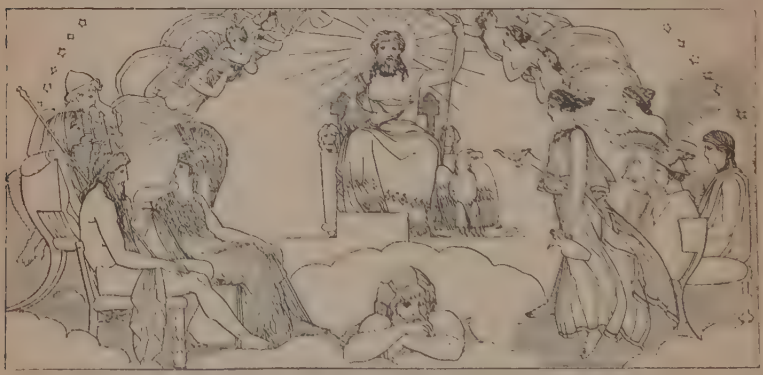
but where is there to be found another so brave and skilful in arms as you are? Yet, to prove that my beauty is not all the merit I possess, I will, if you approve, encounter the Spartan king in single combat before the two armies, and let the fair Helen and the riches I bore along with her be the prize of the victor."

Hector listened to this challenge with delight. Then holding back the Trojan warriors by a motion of his spear, he advanced with stately steps toward the Greeks, who at first assailed him with a volley of arrows, but desisted at the command of Agamemnon when that monarch perceived that Hector desired to parley. The Trojan leader then repeated the proposal of Paris, to which Menelaus joyfully assented. The warriors on both sides now laid down their arms, and formed a circle round the space in which the combat was to be fought. King Priam and his chief counsellors having been summoned from the city, a solemn sacrifice was offered to the gods in sight of the armies, and the leaders on each side swore to abide by the result of the approaching duel. King Priam, unable to endure the spectacle of a combat in which his dearest-loved son might be the victim, retired again to the city. Lots were drawn to decide which of the two heroes should first throw his spear, and fortune favoured Paris, who now advanced in his splendid armour; while Menelaus confronted him with shield uplifted to ward off the impending blow. Raising his pointed javelin, Paris hurled it with all his force; but the Spartan king received it on his shield, and it fell blunted to the ground. With a prayer to Zeus to guide his arm, Menelaus in his turn threw his lance, which pierced completely

through Paris's shield and corselet, and tore his clothing, but failed to wound him. The fierce Atrides now rushed forward with his sword, and smote Paris with vengeful force on the helmet. The Trojan reeled and sank under the blow; but at the same time the sword of Menelaus was shivered like glass. Cursing the treacherous weapon, the angry king seized Paris by the crest of his helmet, and dragged him toward the Grecian line. His comrades raised a shout of joy; but at this moment, when the doom of Paris appeared certain, Venus came to the aid of her favourite. Descending invisible to the field, she broke the band of his helmet, which came empty into the hand of Menelaus. Hurling it with an exclamation of rage among the warriors of Greece, the Spartan king drew his dagger, intending to pierce his helpless antagonist to the heart. But Venus hid Paris in a cloud, and bore him safely from the field; and when the mist dissolved, he was nowhere to be seen. Raging like a lion, Menelaus vainly sought his victim. Then Agamemnon demanded that the conditions of the combat should be fulfilled; and as Paris had undoubtedly been conquered, the Trojans would have had no excuse for refusing the demand.

But such an ending to the war would not have been pleasing to Juno and Minerva, who cared less for the wrongs of Menelaus than for their own, and longed to see Troy in flames and its people destroyed. Nor could Zeus consent to a peaceful settlement of the quarrel, because in that case he would be unable to redeem the solemn pledge he had made to Thetis, that the Greeks should be humbled in order to bring consolation to the wounded feelings of her son. The king and queen of heaven

therefore agreed to send down Minerva for the purpose of bringing about a breach of the truce. Assuming the appearance of a Trojan warrior—Laodocus, the son of Antenor, one of King Priam's counsellors—the goddess came to the side of the great archer Pandarus, as he stood at the head of the Zeleian troops, and urged him to shoot at Menelaus, representing to him that if he were to strike down that hero, he would end the war at a blow, and gain great reward and honour from his own people.



The Council of the Deities.

Listening to the treacherous counsel, Pandarus seized his bow, made of the polished horns of a mountain goat, fitted an arrow to the string, and, concealed behind the shields of his men, took a deadly aim at the King of Sparta, who was standing beside his brother. Loud twanged the string; the arrow whizzed through the air; but Minerva took care that it should not do fatal mischief. It pierced the belt and garments of the king, but barely tore his skin. The warriors around cried out in alarm as they

saw the blood trickling down; but Menelaus relieved their fears by saying that the wound was only trifling. Full of wrath at the treachery of their enemy in thus violating a sacred truce, the Greeks now flew to arms; and on their side the Trojans were not less eager for the battle.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE EXPLOITS OF DIOMEDES—THE DUEL BETWEEN HECTOR AND AJAX.

AND now the roar of battle rose up from the plain as the two armies encountered—the clash of arms, the din of chariot wheels, the cries and groans of dying men. A battle in those old times was very unlike what it is now: the warriors, though they at first advanced in line, did not long preserve any settled order, but each man fought for himself; so that, instead of the movements of great bodies of troops, there was a succession of single combats. Rarely was mercy shown to the vanquished; and the greatest chiefs, equally with their humblest followers, carried off the arms of those whom they slew.

The fiery Antilochus, the son of Nestor, was the first to begin the terrible work of destruction. He hurled his javelin against a huge Trojan warrior named Echepolus, with such force that it passed through his helmet and pierced his brain. As he fell heavily to the ground, Elphenor, one of the leaders of the Abanteans, who fought near the troops of Pylos, sprang forward and seized the body, in order to despoil it; but while he was dragging it along, Agenor, a son of Antenor, and one of the bravest of the Trojans, smote him on the side with a spear, and

he too fell dead. Trojans and Greeks now crowded round the bodies of the fallen warriors, and Ajax, with one fierce blow of his sword, struck down the youthful Simoïsius, the son of the river-god Simoïs. A javelin hurled against Ajax to avenge the fall of this young chief missed the Prince of Salamis, but slew an Ithacan named Leucus. Enraged at the death of his follower, Ulysses cast a spear which passed through the temples of Democoön, a son of Priam. At his downfall the Trojans were chilled with dismay, and began to fall back; but Apollo, who ardently supported their cause, assumed the guise of an old man, and standing on the walls of Troy, that towered above their heads, poured forth words of encouragement, which renewed their ardour, and the battle raged with greater fury than ever. Pirus, the leader of a band of Thracians who had come to aid Troy from the town of Ænus, hurled a huge stone which crushed the ankle of an Ætolian warrior named Diores, and cast him to the ground, where, as he lay on his back, Pirus thrust his spear through his body. But the conqueror's triumph was short-lived. The stern Thoas, King of the Ætolians, cast a javelin which pierced his breast and stood quivering in the wound. Pirus fell; but his comrades, hastily advancing, defended his body from being stripped of its glittering arms.

Now, however, the greater heroes of the Hellenic army began to work havoc in the Trojan ranks. Most terrible and destructive of them all was Diomedes, whom Minerva inspired that day with an ardour and prowess that were more than mortal. In the "Iliad" his furious attack on the Trojans is compared to the rush of a flood:—

"Thus from high hills the torrents swift and strong
Deluge whole fields, and sweep the trees along,
Through ruined moles the rushing wave resounds,
O'erwhelms the bridge, and bursts the lofty bounds.
So raged Tydides, boundless in his ire,
Drove armies back, and made all Troy retire."

Diomedes was often called Tydides because, as I have already told you, he was the son of the hero Tydeus. The slaughter he inflicted was witnessed with rage by Pandarus, who aimed an arrow at him which pierced his shoulder. The exulting archer loudly called on his comrades to complete the overthrow of the Grecian chief; but Diomedes, springing from his chariot, bade his charioteer Sthenelus draw out the arrow from the wound, and implored the aid of Minerva. The goddess, descending to his side, healed his wound, and renewed his strength.

"Be bold," she said to him, "and rely on my protection. I will purge thine eyes from mortal imperfection, so that when any god comes against thee on behalf of the Trojans thou mayst know and avoid him. But if Aphrodite venture into the field, her thou mayst wound: such is my bidding."

Thus encouraged by Pallas, Diomedes rushed into the fight with redoubled fury. One Trojan warrior after another fell before his conquering sword, and their armour, weapons, and chariots were borne off to his tents. Æneas, beholding this wholesale slaughter, sought out Pandarus, and urged him to employ his matchless skill in archery against this terrible warrior.

"If that chief is really Diomedes," answered Pandarus, "and not some god in his shape, he is under the protection of the

immortals. Once already have I smitten him, and yet he pursues his course unchecked. Against these detested Hellenes my bow is powerless. If I quit the field alive, I will break it, and trust rather to sword and spear."

"Be calm," returned Æneas, "and do not despise the weapon given you by the great Apollo. Take your place here in my chariot, drawn by my father's steeds, which are unequalled for swiftness and dexterity in battle. I myself will guide them, and together we will attack yon haughty Greek."

Gladly Pandarus accepted the proposal, and mounted the glittering car, which, drawn by the spirited horses, flew towards the son of Tydeus. Sthenelus saw their approach, and warned Diomedes of it, entreating him to mount his chariot and take to flight. Proudly his chief refused to retreat, but directed him, if in the coming combat both the opposing warriors should fall, to leave his own chariot and seize that of Æneas, because the horses were of divine breed, being of the same descent as those which Zeus had long before given to Tros. Even while he was speaking, Æneas and Pandarus drew near, and the latter cried: "Now, O prince! let us see whether my spear is not more successful than my bow."

Then he threw his weighty lance with all his strength. With a ringing sound the weapon struck the shield of Diomedes, pierced it, and hung in his cuirass. Believing that it had entered his antagonist's body, Pandarus exclaimed in triumph that the pride of Greece had fallen.

"Mistaken boaster," answered Diomedes, "thy dart has failed. Now it is my turn, and one of you, at least, shall fall." As he

spoke, he cast his javelin, which, sped by Minerva, smote the Zeleian chief full in the face, and pierced through to the back of his neck. Headlong he fell to the ground. Æneas sprang down after him, to guard the body, over which he extended his shield, and awaited the attack. Diomedes, descending in his turn, seized a great stone, such as two strong men of these degenerate days

Apollo and Venus rescuing Æneas from Diomedes.

could not have moved. Lifting it high above his head, he hurled it against Æneas. It struck him on the thigh, tearing the flesh and cracking the solid bone. The Dardan prince sank senseless beside the corpse of Pandarus; and he must have perished, but his mother Aphrodite descended, surrounded him with a cloud,

and bore him away from the field. Sthenelus, mindful of his lord's command, seized the splendid chariot and immortal steeds of Æneas, and led them to the camp, returning to the battle without delay. But Diomedes, who, through the power bestowed on him by Pallas, had been able to see the descent of the goddess, and who remembered that he had been bidden to attack her,

Iris conducting the Wounded Venus to Mars.

furiously followed her as she flew away with Æneas in her arms, and thrust his keen lance at her. It tore her veil, and pierced her snowy hand. Drops of immortal blood fell from the wound, and the terrified Aphrodite with shrieks dropped her burden. Apollo took charge of the still insensible warrior, whom he bore

off in safety; and the trembling goddess directed her flight to Olympus, while the daring Grecian pursued her with reproaches:—

"Ill with Jove's daughter bloody fights agree.
The field of combat is no scene for thee;
Go, let thy own soft sex employ thy care,
Go, lull the coward, or delude the fair;
Taught by this stroke, renounce the war's alarms,
And learn to tremble at the name of arms."

Dione consoling Venus.

The swift Iris, goddess of the rainbow, and messenger of the gods, now flew from Olympus to aid Venus, whom she led to where Mars was sitting in his chariot watching the battle. At her request, the god of war gave up his chariot, in which the fainting Aphrodite was conveyed to the Olympian palaces.

There the goddess of beauty was tended by her mother Dione, who consoled her for the insults and pain she had suffered, by predicting that Diomedes would endure many calamities before he gained his home once more, and by reminding her that other deities had had to endure punishments at the hands of mortals. Thus Mars had been conquered by Otus and Ephialtes, two of

Otus and Ephialtes holding Mars captive.

the Giants, and kept loaded with fetters for thirteen months. Soothed by her mother's words, Aphrodite sought the presence of Zeus; who, however, could not help smiling when Minerva hinted that the wound on her hand came from the buckle of some fair one's zone.

Meantime, on the battle-field below, the furious Tydides, carried away by his warlike ardour, had thrice endeavoured to penetrate the cloud with which Apollo had covered Æneas. On his fourth attempt the voice of the god came from the mist, warning him to cease, and he fell back awe-stricken. Apollo conveyed the son of Aphrodite in safety to Troy, and then returning to the field, incited Mars to go and encounter Diomedes. The fierce war-god was only too ready to comply. Assuming the shape of a Thracian warrior, in fiery words he urged the Trojans to renewed efforts. Stung by his reproaches, Hector, Sarpedon, and others of the Trojan leaders plunged into the fight with greater vigour than ever. Minerva having quitted the field, the Greeks had now no immortal aid, while Mars strove with voice and arm in the cause of Troy; and Apollo sent forth Æneas to the field again, perfectly recovered from the terrible wound inflicted on him by Diomedes. That hero, with the two Ajaces and Ulysses, chiefly upheld the battle for the Greeks, though Agamemnon and Menelaus also bore themselves bravely and did great deeds of arms. But while these warriors sternly faced the foe, and while many a Trojan fell before their whizzing javelins and keen-edged swords, they were obliged slowly to fall back before the furious onslaughts of the god of war, who was well supported by Hector, the restored Æneas, and Jove-born Sarpedon. The latter encountered Tlepolemus, a son of Hercules, the leader of the Rhodian troops, and one of the bravest heroes of Greece. Both hurled their darts together; that of Tlepolemus inflicted on Sarpedon a severe wound on the thigh, but Sarpedon's transfixed Tlepolemus's throat. He fell; and though by the valour of

Ulysses his body was preserved from the spoiler's hand, his death sorely discouraged the Greeks.

Their discomfiture was, however, observed by Juno and Pallas from the heights of Olympus. At the bidding of the queen of heaven, Minerva assumed the armour of Jove, and with his leave descended to the battle-field to oppose the prowess of the war-god with her own still greater might. Seeking Diomedes, who was resting beside his chariot, the blue-eyed maid,—as she is often called in the "Iliad,"—reproached him for having retired from the thick of the fight. He reminded her that she had given him permission only to oppose Venus, while Mars was now leading the Trojan onslaught.

> "Then thus Minerva: 'Brave Tydides, hear,
> Not Mars himself, nor aught immortal, fear!
> Full on the god impel thy foaming horse:
> Pallas commands, and Pallas lends thee force!'"

Then springing into the chariot at his side, she herself guided the furious steeds as they rushed through the scene of turmoil and slaughter. Mars had just struck down a huge Ætolian warrior named Periphas; but seeing the approach of Diomedes, he quitted his victim and flew to meet that warrior, at whose head he hurled his gigantic spear. But Minerva interposed her hand, and the weapon glided far from its mark. In his turn Diomedes threw his javelin, which, guided by the goddess, pierced Mars in the groin.

> "Mars bellows with the pain;
> Loud as the roar encountering armies yield
> When shouting millions shake the thundering field.

Both armies start, and trembling gaze around,
And earth and heaven rebellow to the sound."

Wild with rage and pain, the war-god retreated to Olympus, where he poured forth before Jove angry complaints against Diomedes and Minerva. But the king of the gods sternly told him that his wound was the just punishment of his interference and of his ungovernable temper. Having administered this

The Encounter of Mars and Diomedes.

reproof, Zeus caused his wound to be dressed and its smarting relieved.

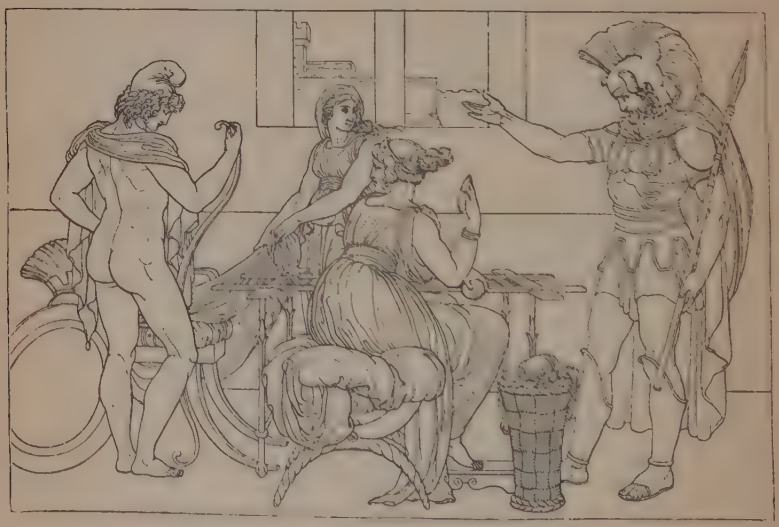
Minerva now again retired from the battle, having accomplished her purpose of driving Mars from it. The heroes of Greece, being no longer opposed by immortals, overpowered the Trojans and carried slaughter through their ranks. Their total defeat seemed inevitable, when Helenus—that brother of Hector who, you will remember, was a priest of Apollo, and a man of great wisdom—counselled Hector to withdraw to the city and

cause a solemn sacrifice to be offered to Pallas, and her aid to be implored, at her shrine. Hector obeyed, and during his absence there was a lull in the conflict. The Lycian prince Glaucus, happening to advance beyond his comrades, met Diomedes, who inquired his name. Glaucus, in reply, proclaimed his rank and birth, and told the story of his ancestor's establishment in Lycia.

Hebe ministering to Mars.

The brave son of Tydeus listened with delight, for Glaucus' and his own grandsires had been friends and allies. He proposed that they should exchange pledges of friendship, and that in future they should avoid each other in the field. The generous proposal was cordially assented to by Glaucus, and the two exchanged armour.

Meanwhile Hector had made his way to Troy, and instructed his mother, Queen Hecuba, to go with all her women to the shrine of Pallas, and there propitiate the goddess with sacrifice and implore her aid. Hecuba obeyed; and in the meantime Hector went to the stately mansion of Paris, whom he found sitting polishing his arms, with his beautiful wife seated at his



Hector reproaching Paris.

side. Indignant at beholding the youth thus employed while the best blood of Troy was being shed in his cause, Hector reproached him bitterly. Paris received the rebuke submissively, and promised forthwith to seek the battle-field. Appeased by this assurance, Hector hastened, before once again joining in the fierce strife without, to see his own fair wife, the loving Androm-

ache, whom he found standing on the ramparts, with their little son Astyanax in his nurse's arms at her side. Very tender and sad was their interview; for Andromache had lost her father and her seven brothers in the early years of the war, and she lived in constant dread lest the husband she loved more than life itself

Hector and Andromache.

should share the same fate. She now entreated him to remain within the ramparts, and content himself with defending them against the Greeks. Gently and mournfully Hector showed her that he could not thus desert his comrades who were in the field. He knew full well, he said, that all his efforts would be of no avail; that in the end Troy must fall. But neither the prospect

of his own doom nor that of the destruction of his country grieved him so much as the thought of his cherished wife pining as the slave of some stern Hellene.

> "May I lie cold before that dreadful day,
> Prest with a load of monumental clay!
> Thy Hector, wrapt in everlasting sleep,
> Shall neither hear thee sigh nor see thee weep."

But, striving to put aside these melancholy thoughts, the chief fondled his son, caressed his wife, and then, bidding her farewell, joined Paris, who was now proceeding to the field. The two rushed against the Greeks with irresistible fury, and had already put several warriors to the sword, when Minerva, seeing the slaughter, descended again from Olympus. But Apollo had seen her approach, and as she alighted near the battle-field he joined her, and proposed that they should bring the general conflict to an end for that day by inciting Hector to challenge any one of the Grecian heroes to single combat. The goddess readily agreed, and at her instigation Helenus went to his brother and told him it was the will of the immortals that such a duel should take place. At the same time, he predicted that the encounter would not end fatally for Hector.

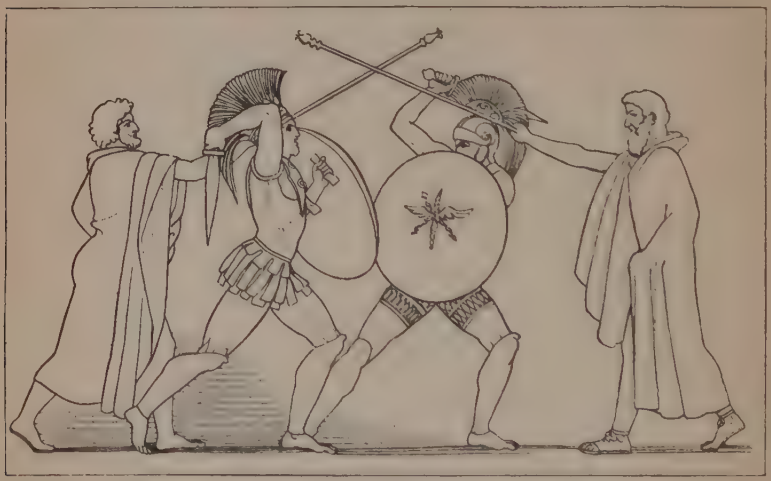
The chief, who saw how terribly his troops had suffered during that long day of fight, gladly obeyed the command conveyed to him by Helenus. He ordered the Trojans to cease all attacks and to fall back, and then advanced in front of them. When the Greeks saw him do this, they in turn held their hands, and the horrid noise of battle was suddenly followed by dead silence, in the

midst of which Hector proudly dared the boldest warrior of Greece to meet him in single combat. The challenge was heard by the Hellenes with astonishment, not unmixed with dread; for the prowess of the Trojan leader was well known to them all, and Achilles was deemed his only superior in strength and skill. Menelaus, seeing that no other warrior presented himself, declared that rather than allow the Grecian name to be dishonoured he would accept the challenge; and he was arming for the purpose when his brother interfered, and urged him not to dare an encounter with a foe who was so much stronger than he. Then Nestor came forward, and with cunning eloquence so inflamed the ardour of his fellow-chiefs that nine of them hurried forth to claim the dangerous honour which all had shunned a few moments before. It was agreed that the champion should be chosen by lot, and this plan being carried out, the lot fell on Ajax Telamon, to the joy of that hero himself and of the whole army, for in the absence of Achilles he was accounted the most formidable warrior of Greece. Hastily donning his armour, the gigantic chief strode forth into the open space reserved for the combat.

> "Thus marched the chief, tremendous as a god;
> Grimly he smiled; earth trembled as he strode;
> His massy javelin quivering in his hand,
> He stood the bulwark of the Grecian band."

Hector himself felt doubtful of the issue as he confronted his huge antagonist; but there was no time for hesitation, and after mutual defiances had been exchanged, the Trojan hurled his lance. Ajax caught it on his shield, but with such force had it

been cast that it drove through six of the seven folds of stubborn bull's hide of which the buckler was composed. Then Ajax threw his javelin with yet greater might; it tore its way through Hector's shield, and even through his corselet, but by dexterously bending his body he escaped a wound. Pulling the weapons from their shields, the two warriors again threw them, and this



Hector and Ajax separated by the Heralds.

time, while Hector's fell blunted to the ground, Ajax slightly wounded his opponent in the neck. Seizing a heavy stone, "black, craggy, vast," Hector dashed it at the Hellene, who received it harmless on his shield, and returned it with such terrible force that it beat down Hector's buckler and struck him heavily on the knees. He fell to the ground; but Apollo instantly restored his strength, and enabled him to renew the

combat. Both warriors now drew their gleaming swords, and were closing on one another with deadly intent, when the heralds on either side interposed, and declared that as the shades of night were descending the conflict must cease.

"It was Hector," cried Ajax, "who gave the challenge; it is for him to propose that the battle should end."

Hector at once, in words of admiration for the valour of his foe, declared that the command of the heralds must be obeyed.

> "Return, brave Ajax, to thy Grecian friends,
> And joy the nation whom thine arm defends;
> As I shall glad each chief and Trojan wife
> Who wearies heaven with vows for Hector's life.
> But let us, on this memorable day,
> Exchange some gift, that Greece and Troy may say,
> 'Not hate, but glory, made these chiefs contend,
> And each brave foe was in his soul a friend.'"

To this generous proposal Ajax readily assented. He bestowed upon Hector a rich belt, glowing with gold and purple, and received in return a sword with hilt and sheath of chased silver. Thus these two valiant heroes parted with words of mutual friendship; and Greeks and Trojans alike sought the security of their camps after the long labours of that sanguinary day.

CHAPTER IX.

THE TRUCE, AND THE BUILDING OF THE WALL—FIRST DEFEAT OF THE GREEKS.

AFTER having feasted together, the leaders of the Hellenes held a solemn council, at which Nestor proposed that before the struggle was renewed the bodies of the many warriors whom Greece had lost on that day should be gathered and burned with the usual funereal honours, without which it was believed that the spirits of the dead were doomed to wander shivering on the banks of Styx, unable to gain access to the kingdom of gloomy Pluto. He also suggested that in order to protect the camp and ships from the possible dangers of a Trojan attack a high wall should be raised along the land front of the position held by the army, and a deep trench dug on the outer side of it. Both these proposals of the wise old King of Pylos were approved by the assembled chiefs.

In the meantime, the Trojan leaders were also gathered in anxious council in King Priam's palace. Their hearts were heavy, for many of their best and bravest had fallen in the terrible battle of that day. After much angry discussion, Antenor, the oldest and most revered of the king's advisers, rose and expressed what was the feeling of many others in the assembly.

"Let us," he said, "forthwith restore to Menelaus his wife and his treasures. To do so will be no more than justice, and it is the will of the gods. If we still refuse, the wrong will assuredly be visited on our heads, and on those of our innocent wives and children."

A murmur of assent ran through the council; but Paris sprang to his feet, glowing with wrath.

"Such cold and cautious counsels as these, O Antenor," he cried, "may suit thy failing strength and ancient years; but such abject submission cannot be agreeable to any warrior's heart. Learn that Helen I will never surrender; but the treasures I bore off with her I will gladly give up, and I am willing also to pay a liberal fine in atonement for the wife of whom I deprived the King of Sparta."

This bold declaration by Paris might have led to another angry debate; but King Priam, who was still passionately fond of the handsome son who had brought such fearful calamities upon him, now interposed. He ordered that the next morning a herald should be despatched to the camp of the Greeks to make the offer of the terms of peace that Paris had mentioned, and also to ask a truce in order that the funeral rites of the dead might be performed.

The chiefs then separated; and the next morning the Trojan herald Idæus set forth to the camp of the Hellenes, and repeated the offer of Paris, further requesting a truce as Priam had directed. The proposal was at first received in silence by the Hellenic leaders; but at last Diomedes advised that neither the treasures, nor even Helen herself, if she were offered, should now be accepted,

since erelong Troy and all it contained would be theirs by conquest. His advice was received with shouts of approval: and Idæus returned to Troy with a message that the peace was rejected, but the truce granted.

The warriors on both sides now busied themselves in gathering, purifying, and placing on funeral pyres the bodies of the slain; and when their share of this mournful task was completed, the Greeks hastened to carry out the recommendation of Nestor. They surrounded their camp on all sides, save where it was protected by the sea, with lofty walls, in which huge towers were placed at intervals to defend the gateways that were left to allow of the exit and entrance of chariots. Outside the wall they dug a deep trench, in the bottom of which sharpened stakes were placed with the points upward. The gods beheld these labours from their seats on Olympus, and Neptune expressed a fear lest mortals should lose their reverence for the deities when they saw such gigantic works reared by their fellow-men, while the god-built ramparts of Troy were doomed to destruction. But Zeus answered,—

"Strong God of Ocean! thou whose rage can make
The solid earth's eternal basis shake!
What cause of fear from mortal works could move
The meanest subject of our realms above?
Where'er the sun's effulgent rays are cast
Thy power is honoured, and thy fame shall last.
But yon proud work no future age shall view,
No trace remain where once the glory grew:
The sapped foundations by thy force shall fall,
And, whelmed beneath thy waves, drop the huge wall;

Vast drifts of sand shall change the former shore ;
The ruin vanished and the name no more."

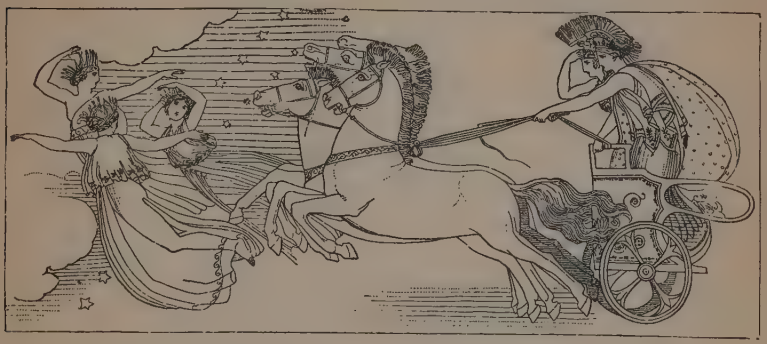
The truce having come to an end, Jupiter assembled the gods in council, and forbade any of them to give aid to either of the contending armies ; and he threatened that any deity who might disobey this command should be subjected to terrible punishments in the lowest depths of Tartarus. Minerva was the first to break the silence which followed this stern decree, and she implored that if not permitted to aid the Greeks by her warlike skill she might at least guide them by her counsels. To this petition from the best loved of his children Jove assented ; and then, mounting his splendid chariot, he proceeded to the topmost heights of Mount Ida, whence he beheld Greeks and Trojans pour forth on the plain to renew the suspended struggle. Holding in his hand the golden scales of Fate, the father of gods and men weighed the fortunes of the combatants, and the scale charged with the fortunes of Greece sank low. Thereupon he sent thick clouds, the flashing lightning, and the dreadful thunder to strike terror into the hearts of the Hellenes. Their courage deserted them ; even the great Ajax shrank from the field, and of all the chiefs Nestor alone confronted the enemy. Nor was his stay a willing one ; but the steed which drew his chariot had received a mortal wound, and would not obey the reins. While the old king was trying to master the infuriated animal, Hector saw him, and rapidly advanced towards him. Nestor would assuredly have perished, had not Diomedes rushed forward in his defence. He made Nestor mount his chariot, and advanced to meet Hector,

whose charioteer he slew, and would have encountered the Trojan hero, but that another terrific flash of lightning descended in front of the horses, which fell to the earth in terror. Nestor then urged his brave companion to retreat, declaring that such was plainly the will of heaven. Unwillingly Diomedes obeyed, and in his flight to the camp was followed by Hector, who pursued him with loud taunts, and encouraged the Trojans to improve the victory given them by the gods. The flight of the Greeks and the fierce advance of the warriors of Troy were witnessed by Juno with shame and rage. In her wild anger she tried to induce Neptune to defy his brother's will and go to the rescue of the Hellenes, whose cause he favoured; but the sea-god sullenly refused to provoke the wrath of Zeus.

The Greeks were now all gathered behind the shelter of their newly-raised wall, while on the other side of the trench the Trojans were assembled in solid and threatening array. In bitterness of heart, Agamemnon addressed a fervent prayer to Jove that at least the army might be permitted to escape the devouring wrath of Hector and his legions. Moved by the distress of the king, Jove sent a favourable sign—an eagle holding a fawn in its talons. This was interpreted as a proof that his anger had passed, and immediately the Greeks, with courage restored, poured forth from behind their fortifications. The son of Tydeus, as usual, was in the forefront of their battle, and carried destruction into the Trojan ranks. Teucer, the young brother of Ajax Telamon, was a famous archer. From under the shelter of his brother's shield he now plied his bow with terrible effect, and warrior after warrior sank under his piercing darts. Two arrows in succession

he aimed at Hector. Both were warded off by the care of Apollo; but one of them struck down the charioteer of the Trojan chief, who, enraged at the loss his troops had suffered from Teucer's destructive bow, sprang from his car, seized a huge stone, and hurled it at the young archer, who, struck at the juncture of neck and shoulder, sank groaning on the plain. But Ajax, standing over him, protected him from the attacks of the foe till he could be carried to the camp.

Encouraged by Teucer's fall the Trojans now again gained



Juno and Minerva going to assist the Greeks.

ground. Once more the Greeks were driven with terrible slaughter behind their wall. This spectacle was more than Juno could endure, and she proposed to Minerva that they should together defy the will of Jove, and fly to the aid of the Hellenes. Minerva assented. Juno caused her chariot to be got ready, and together the goddesses set forth on their daring errand. But from his seat on Mount Ida Zeus had seen their movements, and he now despatched Iris to overtake them with a stern message. With

lightning speed Iris pursued the swift chariot, overtook it, and spoke thus:—

"What frenzy, goddesses! what rage can move
Celestial minds to tempt the wrath of Jove?
Desist, obedient to his high command,
This is his word; and know, his word shall stand.
His lightning your rebellion shall confound,
And hurl you headlong, flaming to the ground;
Your horses crushed beneath the wheels shall lie;
Your car in fragments scattered o'er the sky;
Yourselves condemned ten rolling years to weep
The wounds impressed by burning thunders deep."

The Hours unharnessing Juno's Steeds.

Terrified into submission by this warning, the abashed goddesses turned their horses' heads and returned to Olympus, where their servants the Hours stood waiting to unharness the fiery steeds and lead them to their stalls. As Juno and Minerva with downcast eyes took their places among the other deities,

Jove returned from Mount Ida, and reproached them sternly for their meditated rebellion. Pallas listened to his rebuke in prudent silence; but Juno angrily complained of his tyranny and the unprovoked hate he showed to the people she had taken under her protection.

"Know," answered her lord, "that yet greater misfortunes await thy loved Hellenes, until the day when stern Achilles, in vengeance for the death of his friend Patroclus, shall rise in his wrath and hurl the Trojans in their turn to destruction. Such is my will; and what I will shall stand."

While these quarrels and debates proceeded amongst the immortals, the day had passed, and the appearance of night was regarded with regret by the victorious Trojans, and hailed with joy by the weary and disheartened Greeks. The troops of Troy remained in the field, and Hector, summoning the other leaders to council, directed that provisions should be brought from the city, that the warriors might have rest and refreshment where they were encamped. He also ordered numerous watch-fires to be kindled, so that any attempt of the Greeks to gain their ships might be seen and arrested. On the next day, he predicted, the Trojan army, with the favour of the gods, would be able to master the camp of the Hellenes, destroy their fleet, and slaughter their whole army. Pleased with these bright hopes, which were destined never to be realized, the warriors of Troy feasted and rested in their tents, while the long line of their watch-fires gleamed like stars over the plain.

CHAPTER X.

THE EMBASSY TO ACHILLES—THE NIGHT ADVENTURE OF DIOMEDES AND ULYSSES.

WHILE the victorious Trojans thus encamped on the plain, eager to renew the strife, the Greeks, shut up within their fortifications, were in a very different mood. Dejection and alarm were visible on every face. Agamemnon summoned the other chiefs to a council in his tent, and when all had silently assembled, he addressed them.

"We have good reason, O princes," he said, "to rail against the gods. They promised us, by the mouths of oracles and soothsayers, victory, rich spoils, and a safe return to Greece. Now, a shameful flight can alone save the remnant of our host, with the loss of our glory, our wealth, and too many of our comrades, whose bones we must leave whitening on this unhappy shore. Such is clearly the decree of Jove. Let us hasten to quit this fatal country, and strive no more to conquer a city defended by the immortals themselves."

This proposal was listened to at first in dismayed silence; but very soon Diomedes rose to his feet.

"Assuredly, Atrides," he cried, "the gods have made thee but

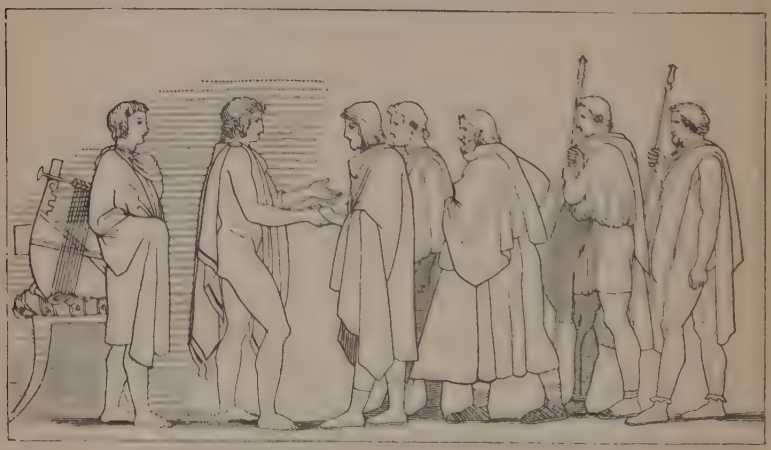
by halves a king. Power they have given thee, wide territories, and many subjects, but not the courage or the constancy of a true leader. Fly if you will, but the Greeks will remain to fulfil their enterprise and conquer Troy; or, if all others accompany thee, I at least will remain till Troy or myself have fallen."

This fiery declaration elicited a shout of approval from most of the listeners. Next Nestor arose, and after warmly praising the undaunted courage of the son of Tydeus, frankly declared that in depriving Achilles of Briseis, Agamemnon had committed a wrong which now it was time to repair.

The King of Mycenæ, hasty and haughty though he had been, was by this time sufficiently humbled and eager to confess, and if possible to atone for, his fault. He at once proclaimed his readiness to restore to Achilles his captive, and with her a rich treasure of gold, of brazen vases, fleet steeds, and female slaves. By Nestor's advice, Ulysses, Ajax, and the venerable Phœnix, who had been one of the instructors of Achilles in his youth, were sent as ambassadors to the son of Peleus to repeat to him the offers made by Agamemnon. Passing through the camp in the dusk of the evening, the messengers at last reached the tents of the Myrmidons, and found Achilles playing on the harp, and singing lays of the heroic deeds of warriors of old, with Patroclus for his only companion. As the ambassadors entered, he received them with cordial greetings and unbounded hospitality, for of all the Greeks they were the men he most esteemed.

When an ample repast had been partaken of, and bowls of wine were passing from hand to hand, Ulysses at last proclaimed

the purpose of the visit. In a speech full of eloquence and delicate flattery he depicted the melancholy position of the Hellenic army, the danger lest utter destruction should overtake it, and the solitary hope of rescue that lay in Achilles' unequalled might. He implored the hero to achieve the greatest conquest of all, that of his own pride. Ulysses then enumerated the long array of gifts which Agamemnon was prepared to offer in amends for the wrong he had done; and closed with another passionate

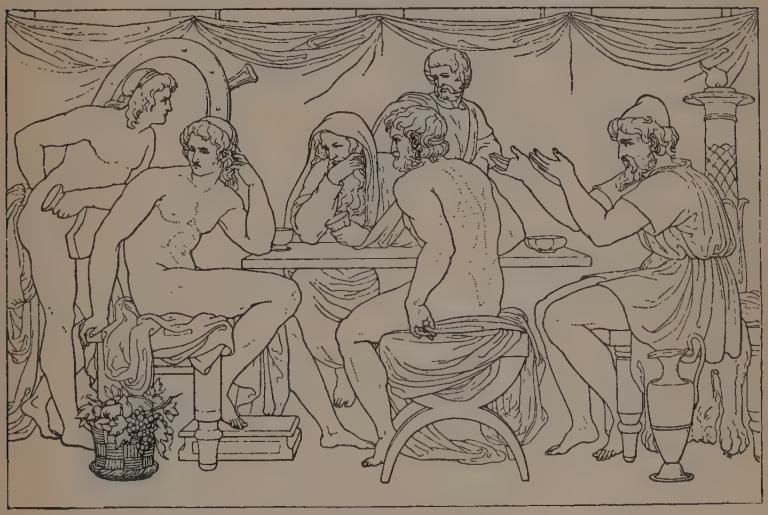


Achilles receiving the Ambassadors.

appeal to Achilles to come to the relief of his distressed countrymen.

But the soul of the son of Thetis had been too deeply wounded for honeyed words or rich gifts to appease him. The sense of his injury, and scorn and hate of the King of Mycenæ burned hotly within him, and he now gave to the dexterous speech of Ulysses

an answer that, like a torrent in flood-time, grew more furious as it proceeded. He began by reviewing the services he had rendered during the war. For these services he had been rewarded by seeing the woman he loved dragged from his tent; and no offers should tempt him to expose himself again to the risk of enduring such humiliation. What need, he tauntingly asked, could there



Ulysses pleading with Achilles.

be for his services? Had not the Greeks reared round their camp a mighty wall, and further guarded it with a deep trench? It was true that at one time there had been no need for such defences. The great Hector had been too prudent to venture from the walls of Troy; and when he had once done so, had narrowly escaped with his life. Why this was so no longer, let

the Greeks learn from the King of Mycenæ. Finally, Achilles announced his purpose of forthwith returning home:—

> "My fates long since by Thetis were disclosed,
> And each alternate, life or fame, proposed:
> Here if I stay before the Trojan town
> Short is my date, but deathless my renown;
> If I return, I quit immortal praise
> For years on years and long-extended days.
> Convinced, though late, I find my fond mistake,
> And warn the Greeks the wiser choice to make.
> Go then; to Greece report our fixed design:
> Bid all your councils, all your armies join;
> Let all your forces, all your arts conspire
> To save the ships, the troops, the chiefs from fire.
> One stratagem has failed, and others will:
> Ye find Achilles is unconquered still."

And in this resolve the hero remained immovable, though his much-loved old tutor Phœnix, with tears streaming down his furrowed cheeks, implored him to come to the rescue of the perishing Hellenes. When Ajax reproached him for his unyielding pride, he answered with courtesy, but persisted in his refusal. At his request Phœnix remained with him in his tent. The two other chiefs sorrowfully returned to the camp, and reported the ill success of their mission. The assembled princes listened with dismay; but Diomedes again revived their courage by haughtily declaring that Achilles' aid could be dispensed with, if only they held resolutely to their defences.

The leaders then separated to seek repose; but Agamemnon, filled with anxiety for the safety of the army, and tortured by

the knowledge that to his act its present dangerous position was due, was unable to sleep. After tossing for some hours on his uneasy couch, he rose, and again summoned the other chiefs to a conference, in order to devise, if possible, some means of escape. Then Nestor proposed that some one should be sent as a spy into the Trojan camp to learn the designs of the enemy. Diomedes at once volunteered for this dangerous enterprise, and it was decided that Ulysses should accompany him. Hastily, therefore —for the night was now far spent—did they assume their arms and stealthily set forth from the camp. Each offered up a prayer to Minerva to watch over their safety, and bring them back unharmed to their comrades — a petition which the goddess accorded. Climbing amid the heaps of dead that strewed the plain, they made their way toward the Trojan tents.

There, as it chanced, Hector had brought together the leaders of his host, and inquired which of them would venture within the Grecian lines to ascertain what the beaten invaders were doing and what plans they meditated. A certain youth named Dolon, the son of Eumedes, one of the heralds of Troy, was present at the council. He was tempted by the offers of reward and honour which Hector made, and undertook the perilous mission, on condition that when the Grecian spoils came to be divided, the chariot and horses of Achilles should be his share. To this condition the Trojan leader readily agreed; and Dolon, slinging his bow across his back, throwing a wolf-skin over his shoulders, and carrying a javelin in his hand, quitted the tents to perform his task. Scarcely had he got outside the Trojan lines when Diomedes and Ulysses saw his approach, concealed them-

selves till he had passed, and then turned and followed him. At first Dolon imagined that his pursuers had been sent by Hector to recall him; but he soon perceived that they were enemies, and fled precipitately, running in his terror towards the Grecian wall. Diomedes began to fear lest the fugitive should fall into the hands of some of the warriors who kept guard over the camp, and therefore threw his javelin, purposely missing Dolon, over whose shoulder the weapon whizzed with such force that the trembling youth sank down overcome with fright. The two heroes now came up and seized him. With unmanly tears he begged that his life might be spared, promising that his father would pay a large ransom.

"Whoever thou art," returned Ulysses, "be bold, nor show such coward fear of death. Art thou some spy sent by Hector, or a wretched plunderer despoiling the dead?"

"I am come hither," replied the trembling Dolon, "at Hector's command, to learn whether your army meditates flight or intends to renew the struggle with to-morrow's light. For this service he promised me the chariot and horses of Achilles."

"A noble reward indeed," said Ulysses with a grim smile. "But tell us truly, where is Hector encamped? and what is the station of the other chiefs of your army?"

Thus questioned, the craven, hoping that his life would be spared in return for the information he gave, described all the dispositions of the Trojan camp, and told how some Thracian allies, newly arrived under Rhesus, son of King Eioneus, were stationed apart from the rest. Now, it had been predicted by an oracle that if the snow-white horses of Rhesus should once feed

on the grass of the Trojan plain, Troy would never be conquered; and Diomedes and Ulysses at once resolved to prevent, if they could, the fulfilment of the prediction. When Dolon had told all he knew, he renewed his entreaties that his life should be granted him; but even while he spoke, the stern son of Tydeus, raising his keen-edged sword, smote off the head of the wretched sup-

The Death of Dolon.

pliant. Tearing from the corpse the armour and the wolf-skin cloak, Ulysses dedicated them to Pallas; and then the two heroes made their way across the plain to the spot where they had learned that the Thracian troops were encamped.

In the tents all was silence. The warriors, wearied with the long march of the day, were buried in deep slumber, with their

arms beside them. In the midst lay Rhesus, his splendid golden armour hung above his head, and his four milk-white steeds fastened behind his chariot. The ill-fated chieftain and twelve of his followers were slain by the relentless Diomedes without one of them awaking to know whence came the fatal blow. Ulysses contrived to untie the horses and lead them forth without disturbing the quiet of the camp; and then the two daring

Diomedes and Ulysses returning with the Spoils of Rhesus.

heroes returned to the Greek fortifications unobserved by the Trojan sentinels. They were joyfully greeted by their friends, and when they had told the adventures of the night there was great exultation among the Hellenes; while the Trojans, on the other hand, when they beheld the havoc that had been wrought in the Thracian tents, were filled with grief and unavailing rage.

CHAPTER XI.

NEW DISASTERS FOR THE GREEKS—THE ARTIFICE OF JUNO—THE BATTLE AT THE SHIPS.

MORNING came; and at the bidding of Zeus—a command she was eager to obey—Eris, the goddess of discord, descended over the two armies, waving her livid torches, and exciting in every warrior the wrath of battle. On the side of the Hellenes none was more conspicuous than Agamemnon, as, clad in glittering arms, he fought in the front of his troops; while Hector, as he moved about amid the Trojans, issuing his commands and encouraging his men, shone among them like a star. Agamemnon, inspired by Pallas, wrought great deeds of arms. Warrior after warrior he smote down; while the other Hellenes followed with ardour in the bloody path he hewed through the hostile ranks, till at last the Trojans were driven back in confusion to their own gates, and all Hector's efforts could not restore their order.

But Zeus, watching the fortunes of the conflict, now sent down swift Iris to bid Hector avoid Agamemnon so long as he led the Grecian attack, but as soon as the king should retire wounded from the field, to assail the enemy with renewed energy.

Meanwhile Agamemnon continued to carry destruction through the field, till having slain Iphidamas, one of the sons of Antenor, Coön, the brother of the slaughtered youth, advanced with a determination to avenge him, and succeeded in piercing the king's arm above the elbow. He paid the penalty of his daring with his life; but the pain of Agamemnon's wound soon became

Eris descending over the Armies.

unendurable, and he was obliged to quit the field, after urging the Hellenic warriors to complete the victory. No sooner had he departed than Hector, mindful of the bidding of Zeus, renewed the fainting courage of his warriors with fiery words, and led them against the Greeks with such irresistible fury that the latter were swept back even to the verge of their camp. Diomedes

and Ulysses strove gallantly to uphold the battle, and the son of Tydeus hurled a javelin which pierced Hector's helmet without wounding him, but so awed him that he shrank back from a hand-to-hand encounter with the fierce King of Argos. While the latter, after scornfully taunting him, was using his terrible sword against less distinguished enemies, Paris, concealed behind an ancient tomb that stood in the plain, succeeded in piercing his foot with an arrow, and Diomedes, like Agamemnon, was obliged to leave the battle-field. Ulysses, remaining alone of all the chiefs in front of the enemy, also received a severe wound in the side from a Trojan warrior named Socus, whom, however, he slew in return. But as he was sorely weakened by his wound, while the enemy pressed on him with increasing fury, he raised his voice and shouted loudly for aid. His cry was heard by Menelaus and Ajax Telamon, who came to his rescue, and drove back the Trojans on that side of the battle. But on the other Hector was carrying all before him; while Paris, with another of his arrows, penetrated the shoulder of Machaon, the man among all the Hellenes who was most skilled in the healing art. At the bidding of Idomeneus, who was doing his utmost to resist the advance of Hector, Nestor took Machaon in his chariot and conveyed him from the field.

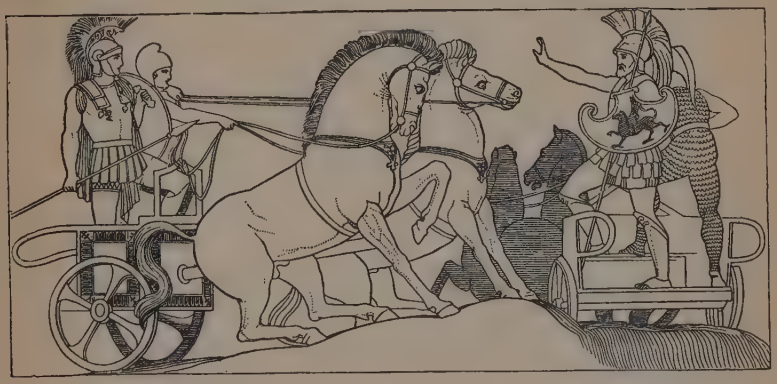
The Trojan prince, hearing of the devastation that Ajax was inflicting on the troops opposed to him, now hastened to confront that hero, who, seeing this new and formidable assailant approach, slowly and reluctantly fell back.

Meantime, Achilles, hearing the roar of the battle borne back to the Grecian camp, had ascended the mast of one of his ships

to mark its progress. There he had caught sight of Nestor bearing back to the tents the wounded Machaon, for whom he had always had a strong friendship. Touched with pity, he sent Patroclus to Nestor's tent to learn if it really was Machaon who had been stricken down. Patroclus obeyed; and Nestor took advantage of the opportunity to excite his sympathies by a mournful account of the misfortunes the Hellenes had suffered, finally urging him to gain the permission of Achilles to lead the Myrmidons to the battle, in his place and clad in his arms. Patroclus did not promise to do so, but his heart was filled with sorrow for the disasters of his countrymen as he returned to Achilles with the news he had gained.

But now, with some of their bravest leaders wounded, the Greeks had been driven completely off the field, and were crowded inside the wall that sheltered their camp, which the Trojans were preparing to assail. As their chariots could not pass the trench, Hector, by the advice of Polydamas, one of the bravest of his warriors, ordered all his troops to alight and to advance on foot to the attack; and he divided them into five bodies, each of which was to make the assault at a particular point. The combat had already begun, when an eagle was seen in the air battling with a huge serpent. This spectacle, which was regarded as a sign from Zeus, was viewed with awe and uneasiness by the Trojans; and Polydamas urged Hector to abandon the attack for that day. Hector, however, refused to follow the advice, and advanced furiously to the assault at the head of his men. For a long time the conflict raged without advantage to either side. The Hellenes defended their wall

with the fury of despair, and the two Ajaces particularly distinguished themselves. At last the Lycian prince Sarpedon succeeded in making a breach in the wall; but the Greeks fought with such resolution that he was unable to force an entrance. Just then, however, Hector, seizing an immense stone, dashed it against one of the gates with such irresistible force that the massive timbers were shattered into fragments and fell in a heap of ruins. Instantly Hector sprang through the gateway,

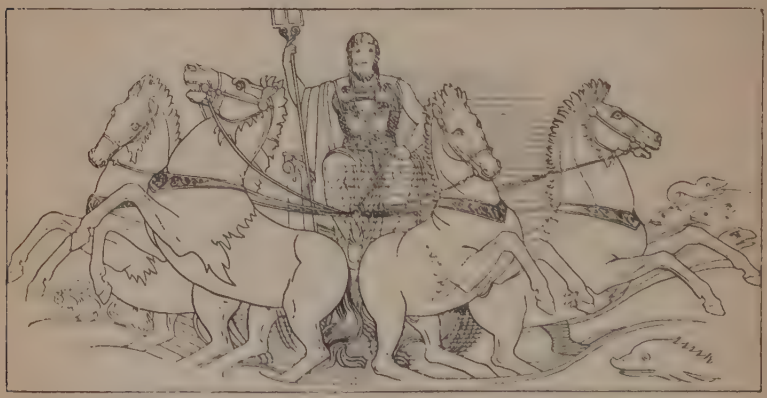


Polydamas advising Hector to withdraw the Chariots from the Trench.

and after him the Trojans poured in like a tide. The Hellenes gave way on all sides, and their total destruction seemed inevitable.

But help was at hand. Zeus, having thus far been a spectator of the battle, now grew weary of such a scene of blood, and turned his attention elsewhere, believing that after the warning he had given none of the other gods would dare to interfere. But Neptune, who strongly sympathized with the Greeks, quickly

observed that his brother was no longer watching the battle-field. Plunging into the sea, he sought his shining palace which rose in the depths of the blue Ægean, armed his mighty limbs, and ascended his chariot, in which he rose from the waves near the scene of conflict. There he took the shape of the seer Calchas, and, passing amid the disordered Hellenes, uplifted his mighty voice in words of fiery encouragement. Then touching the two Ajaces with his staff, he imparted to their muscles more



Neptune rising from the Sea.

than mortal strength, and to their hearts new hope and daring. In the same way he cheered some of the other chiefs; and they, marshalling their men in a solid phalanx in front of the ships, awaited Hector's attack with stern resolution.

Then "front to front the armies met with a mighty roar." Great deeds of valour were performed on both sides, and many a brave warrior's soul was sent to the realms of the dead. On the

one side Ajax Telamon, on the other the son of Oileus, wrought havoc among the Trojan ranks, and in the centre Idomeneus and his kinsman Meriones upheld the battle and repelled the assaults of the enemy. Thus the conflict raged, and the Greeks began to gain ground. Hector, however, obstinately kept his place within the wall, and by his desperate valour and the might of his arm renewed the fainting courage of his warriors.

In the meantime, Agamemnon, Ulysses, and Diomedes, kept from the scene of conflict by the wounds they had received, encountered Nestor near the ships, and the four chiefs took counsel together as to the perils of their situation. Agamemnon, ignorant of the aid which Neptune had given, again proposed that safety should be sought in flight; but this suggestion was condemned by the others, and it was resolved that, wounded as they were, they should show themselves to the troops and incite them to continue the battle. This resolution they hastened to carry out; and the Hellenic warriors, cheered by the sight of their leaders, fought on with determined courage.

Juno had been filled with delight when she beheld the god of ocean go to the help of the Greeks; but she was fearful lest he should be detected by Jupiter, who was still seated on Mount Ida. She therefore determined, if possible, to engage the attention of her lord. Attiring herself with her utmost care, she obtained from Aphrodite the loan of her magic zone or girdle, which was endowed with the gift of imparting irresistible influence to its wearer. Then she drove in her chariot to the far distant isle of Lemnos, where in a sombre cave dwelt Somnus, the god of sleep, and besought him to exercise his power on

Zeus. The deity reminded her that once before he had granted her a similar favour, when she desired the king of the gods to slumber while she pursued with her wrath his son Hercules; and that, on awaking, Zeus had visited him with heavy punishment. Juno ridiculed his fears, and promised that if he would comply with her request she would give him for a bride Pasithea, the

Sleep escaping from the Wrath of Jupiter.

youngest of the Graces, whom he had long wooed in vain. This temptation was more than Somnus could withstand, and having bound her by an irrevocable oath to fulfil her promise, he consented to do as she required. The goddess now took her way to Mount Ida, where her beauty and fascinations completely engrossed the attention of Jove, till Somnus, faithful to his

pledge, wrapped him in profound slumber. Then at Juno's bidding, Somnus bore to Neptune a message to make the most of the opportunity thus afforded him.

Nothing loath, Neptune led on the Greeks with redoubled energy against the troops of Troy. He contrived to bring Hector into conflict with the greater Ajax. The Trojan warrior

Juno lulls Jupiter to sleep on Mount Ida.

first hurled his javelin; but it failed to pierce the armour of his antagonist, who, stooping, raised a ponderous stone from the ground and dashed it at Hector with irresistible force. It broke his shield, and alighted full on his chest and throat. Dropping his lance, the chief sank fainting to the ground. With loud shouts of joy the Greeks sprang forward to slay him; but in a

moment his followers clustered round him, and under the cover of their protecting shields he was raised still senseless, from the ground, and borne off to the city.

Deprived of their leader, the Trojans began to fall back, while the Hellenes vigorously followed up their advantage, and strewed the plain with their dead. The total ruin of Troy seemed to be

Jupiter binding Juno in Golden Chains.

impending; but at this crisis Jupiter awoke from his slumber, and looking down on the battle-field beheld the disasters which had befallen the army he had last seen on the point of victory. At once perceiving the trick that Juno had played him, he rebuked her so wrathfully—reminding her of the time when he had punished her for a like offence by binding her in golden

chains—that she trembled with fear, and vowed that it was not at her bidding that Neptune had taken part in the strife. Appeased by her submission, Zeus bade her proceed to Olympus and despatch Iris to summon the sea-god from the field. She hastened to Olympus, where the other deities were feasting, and repeated Jove's mandate to Iris; but at the same time she strove to provoke the other gods to rebellion, and would have induced Mars to defy the will of Zeus, if Pallas, more prudent, had not restrained him. Iris, descending swift as the wind, approached Neptune as he stood on the corpse-strewn plain, and delivered to him the command of Zeus that he should instantly withdraw from the battle. The proud god of ocean was at first disposed to return a defiant answer; but when the immortal messenger represented to him the danger and folly of such a course, he listened to her words, and, sulkily withdrawing from the field, plunged beneath the waves and returned to his palace.

In the meantime, Jupiter had despatched Apollo to restore Hector's strength, heal his wounds, and lead his warriors again to the attack. Gladly the god of light, who was always friendly to the Trojans, obeyed this command. By his divine power Hector was in a moment restored to all his wonted vigour, and, returning to the field, carried destruction among the Greeks, who were dismayed on seeing the reappearance of the chief they had believed to be dead or dying. Nevertheless, encouraged by their chiefs, they offered a furious resistance to the advance of the Trojans. But their efforts were in vain. Apollo himself fought in the front of the ranks of Troy, and when he shook the terrible ægis of Zeus, the Hellenes were filled with terror, and fled in

tumultuous haste to their camp. Hector followed in eager pursuit, and heaped the plain with their dead. Arrived at the wall, Apollo tore in it a huge breach, through which the Trojans poured like a raging flood, and drove the Greeks back among their ships. Here another desperate struggle took place. Again and again the assailants pushed forward till within reach of the

Ajax defending the Ships.

ships, and with flaming brands sought to set them on fire; but Ajax, and others of the Hellenic chiefs, exerting themselves to the utmost, as often struck down those who thus came forward. At last Hector himself forced his way to the prow of one of the vessels, and, grasping it, called for a torch wherewith to kindle the conflagration by which, as he hoped, the escape of the invaders would be cut off.

CHAPTER XII.

THE DEEDS AND DEATH OF PATROCLUS, AND THE BATTLE OVER HIS BODY.

UNABLE any longer to endure in silence the spectacle of the terrible calamities which had overtaken the Greeks, Patroclus now hurried to the tent of Achilles; and, as he entered, the intensity of his feelings overcame his manly self-control, and the tears fell fast from his eyes. The son of Thetis, who loved him more than any other mortal, inquired the cause of this excessive grief. In reply, Patroclus described in moving language the miserable condition of the Hellenic army, and entreated Achilles to lay aside his vindictive wrath and defend his perishing countrymen; or, if that could not be, to permit him (Patroclus) to assume his arms and lead the Myrmidons to the battle.

> "Clad in thy dreadful arms if I appear,
> Proud Troy shall tremble, and desert the war;
> Without thy person Greece shall win the day,
> And thy mere image chase the foes away.
> Pressed by fresh forces, her o'erlaboured train
> Shall quit the ships, and Greece respire again."

To this request Achilles gave a reluctant consent. Willingly would he himself, he said, have plunged into the conflict, but he could not forget, or yet forgive, the wrongs he had endured. Since, however, the Trojans were now within sight of his ships, Patroclus might don his arms and lead his troops to the fray. But the hero cautioned his friend to meddle not with Hector—a victim he reserved for himself; and not to follow the flying Trojans too far, lest some god, befriending the enemy, should destroy him.

While the two friends were thus conversing, Hector had at last driven back Ajax Telamon from the ship he had striven valorously to defend, and had set it on fire. As the flames ascended and the great clouds of smoke rolled along the shore, Achilles hurriedly bade Patroclus arm, while he himself mustered the formidable array of the Myrmidons—warriors dreaded for their fierceness, and who had complained bitterly, while they had remained inactive in their tents, that their chief should withhold them from the field. Having marshalled them in their ranks, the hero reminded them of these complaints, and bade them now wreak their warlike fury to the full. Patroclus came forth in Achilles' arms, and mounted Achilles' chariot, drawn by three steeds, of which two were of immortal birth and unequalled speed and beauty; then, at the head of the troops, descended upon the surprised Trojans like an avalanche.

> "The war stood still, and all around them gazed,
> When great Achilles' shining armour blazed;
> Troy saw, and thought the dread Achilles nigh,—
> At once they see, they tremble, and they fly."

The burning ship was hastily abandoned, and the Greeks speedily extinguished the flames. Then followed a terrible scene of rout, and pursuit, and bloodshed, in which Patroclus and his Myrmidons were ever at the front, though the other Hellenes well seconded their efforts. The spectacle is splendidly described in the "Iliad:"—

"As when the hand of Jove a tempest forms,
And rolls the cloud to blacken heaven with storms,
Dark o'er the fields th' ascending vapour flies,
And shades the sun, and blots the golden skies;
So from the ships, along the dusky plain,
Dire Flight and Terror drove the Trojan train,—
E'en Hector fled: through heaps of disarray
The fiery coursers forced their lord away,
While far behind his Trojans fall confused,
Wedged in the trench, in one vast carnage bruised:
Chariots on chariots roll; the clashing spokes
Shake, while the madding steeds break short their yokes:
In vain they labour up the steepy mound;
Their charioteers lie foaming on the ground.
Fierce on the rear, with shouts, Patroclus flies;
Tumultuous clamour fills the fields and skies;
Thick drifts of dust involve their rapid flight;
Clouds rise on clouds, and heaven is snatched from sight.
The affrighted steeds, their dying lords cast down,
Scour o'er the fields, and stretch to reach the town.
Loud o'er the rout was heard the victor's cry
Where the war bleeds, and where the thickest die,—
Where horse, and arms, and chariots lie o'erthrown,
And bleeding heroes under axles groan.
No stop, no check, the steeds of Peleus knew;
From bank to bank the immortal coursers flew.

High bounding o'er the fosse the whirling car
Smokes through the ranks, o'ertakes the flying war,
And thunders after Hector: Hector flies;
Patroclus shakes his lance; but Fate denies."

The brave Sarpedon beheld the flight and slaughter of the Trojan host with shame and rage, and loudly denouncing their cowardice, declared that unaided he would oppose the Hellenic hero. He accordingly sprang from his chariot, and approached Patroclus, who also alighted. Jupiter, watching the scene from Olympus, was filled with grief when he saw his valiant son thus rushing on his fate, and asked his consort whether it would not be well for him to bear Sarpedon off to Lycia, and save him from the stern sword of the Phthian chief. But Juno, whose hate to Troy and all her champions knew no abatement, complained that such an act would exhibit unfair partiality; and the king of heaven laid aside his half-formed purpose, and left Sarpedon to his doom. As the warriors approached each other, Patroclus first hurled his javelin, which missed its mark, but struck down Thrasymedes, Sarpedon's charioteer. Sarpedon in his turn cast a dart which inflicted a fatal wound on Pedasus, one of Achilles' horses. The two heroes now met in close encounter, and Sarpedon threw his massy lance, which hissed over Patroclus' shoulder. But Patroclus gave a deadly thrust of his spear that pierced Sarpedon's breast, and passed close to his heart. As some huge pine on the mountain side sinks before the blows of the woodman's axe, so fell Sarpedon on the blood-dyed plain. In faint and dying accents he implored his comrade Glaucus to

defend his body and avenge his death, and then gave up his breath as the victorious Patroclus withdrew his spear from the ghastly wound it had inflicted.

Overcome with grief, Glaucus heard the dying appeal of his leader. He was still suffering from a wound inflicted by one of the arrows of Teucer, and was unable to oppose the might of Patroclus. In his distress he offered up an impassioned prayer to Apollo to restore his strength and enable him to fulfil the request of Sarpedon. The prayer was granted. His frame was infused with new vigour, and he rushed forward to guard his friend's body, at the same time loudly calling the other Trojan chiefs to his aid. A desperate struggle ensued over Sarpedon's corpse. Now the Grecks, and now the Trojans were driven back, while on either side the warriors fell thick and fast. The object of contention was erelong hidden beneath a heap of slain; but at last the Trojans were again compelled to retreat, and the radiant arms of Sarpedon were torn from his body and borne off as a trophy to the Hellenic camp, while the naked corpse of the hero, covered with dust and blood, was left unheeded on the ground. Then Apollo, at the bidding of Zeus, bore it to the banks of the river Simois, where it was cleansed from the horrid stains of battle, and carried in the arms of Sleep and Death to distant Lycia, there to receive due funereal honours.

Meanwhile Patroclus continued his ardent pursuit of the flying Trojans, strewing his path with their slain; and, unheeding the command of Achilles, advanced to the very gates of Troy. Thrice he struck the rampart itself; but when he advanced a fourth time, the voice of Apollo, issuing from a cloud, bade him

forbear. Filled with awe, the hero fell back; and now the god of light, assuming the form of a Trojan warrior, hastened to Hector's side and encouraged him to renew the conflict, predicting that he would be victorious. Hector obeyed, and at last dared to encounter Patroclus hand to hand. How the fight might have ended had the two warriors been left to themselves none can tell.

Sleep and Death bearing the Body of Sarpedon to Lycia.

But Apollo intervened, and approaching Patroclus from behind, smote him on the neck, at the same time causing the helmet and armour of Achilles to drop from his person, and leave him defenceless. While he thus stood, overcome with astonishment, a Dardan archer, named Euphorbus, hurled a spear, which wounded him. Awakening to a sense of his danger, the hero

turned to fly; but in a moment Hector was upon him, and struck him mortally wounded to the ground. At this sight the hearts of all the Hellenes sunk within them; while the Trojan chief taunted his victim with the miserable end of all his high hopes of conquest. But even with his last breath the dying Patroclus made answer:—

"Vain boaster! cease, and know the powers divine;
Jove's and Apollo's is this deed, not thine:
To Heaven is owed whate'er your own you call,
And Heaven itself disarmed me ere my fall.
Had twenty mortals, each thy match in might,
Opposed me fairly, they had sunk in fight.
By Fate and Phœbus * was I first o'erthrown;
Euphorbus next; the third mean part thy own.
But thou, imperious! hear my latest breath;
The gods inspire it, and it sounds thy death.
Insulting man, thou shalt be soon as I,
Black fate hangs o'er thee, and thy hour draws nigh;
E'en now on life's last verge I see thee stand,
I see thee fall, and by Achilles' hand."

With this terrible prediction Patroclus expired. His words filled Hector with gloomy apprehension; but, tearing his spear from the body, he sprang forward to make prize of the splendid chariot and steeds of Achilles, which, however, under the guidance of the skilled Automedon, were soon far beyond his reach.

Of the Hellenic warriors, Menelaus was the first to advance to the side of the dead Patroclus, and extend his shield to protect the corpse. Euphorbus, inflamed with pride because he had been

* Apollo.

the first to wound the hero after Apollo had stripped him of his armour, now strode forward:

"This hand, O Atrides," he cried, "first struck down Patroclus; do thou resign to me the spoils which are mine by conquest, and retire while life yet remains to thee."

"Proud boaster!" returned the King of Sparta, "it was but a little since that thy brother Hyperenor fell before my sword. Fly while thou may'st, or thou shalt share his fate."

"No," answered Euphorbus fiercely; "but for my brother's blood I will exact thine own, and bestow thy spoils upon our sorrowing parents." As he spoke he flung his javelin, which fell blunted from Menelaus' shield; his dart, on the other hand, smote Euphorbus full on the throat, and the point, gliding through the neck, gleamed among the golden hair that fell over his shoulders. Down fell the young warrior lifeless beside Patroclus, having paid thus dearly for his share in the hero's death. But now Apollo recalled Hector from his fruitless chase after the steeds of Achilles, and urged him to avenge Euphorbus, and force Patroclus' body from the Greeks who guarded it. Hector promptly obeyed, and summoned his warriors to aid in his attack in a voice that resounded through the plain.

When Menelaus, who was as yet unsupported by any other of the Greek leaders, saw Hector approaching, he pondered, uncertain whether to defy the Trojan chief alone, or to retreat and seek assistance. Conscious, however, that his might was not equal to Hector's, he reluctantly withdrew from the body of Patroclus, and hurried to Ajax, who was fighting at some little distance, to obtain his help. This was readily granted. When

the two returned, the splendid arms of Achilles had already been piled in Hector's chariot and despatched toward the city; and the body itself was being raised from the ground, Hector having seized it by the head. But when he saw the mighty Ajax drawing near, he loosened his grasp and sprang back. His rapid retreat provoked the scorn and anger of Glaucus, who was eager to obtain possession of Patroclus' corpse, that it might be offered to the Hellenes in ransom for the spoils of Sarpedon. He heaped bitter reproaches on the head of Hector, who responded with a stern denial of their justice, and prepared for another fierce onslaught on the steadfast band of Hellenes who guarded the body of the Phthian hero. First, however, he hastened to overtake the chariot which was conveying Achilles' arms to Troy, and himself assumed them, while Jove inspired him with renewed strength and energy. Then, scarcely less bright and terrible in Achilles' glittering mail than that hero himself, Hector addressed the Trojan warriors, warning them that they must either conquer or die, and promising that whoever should drag the slain Patroclus to within the lines of Troy, should share equally with himself in the spoils and the honours of that eventful day.

Fired by his words, his followers rushed upon the Greeks like the waves of a stormy sea. Beholding the coming foe, Ajax perceived that unless Menelaus and himself obtained some help they must lose not merely the body of the dead hero, but their own lives. He therefore uplifted his voice, and summoned all the other Hellenic chiefs within hearing. Ajax Oileus swiftly answered to the call, followed by Idomeneus and Meriones, and a crowd of men of lesser mark. Furiously the combat raged over

the dead Patroclus. Hippothous, the leader of the troops of Larissa, had seized the corpse by the feet, and boring the sinewy ankles, had passed a thong through them, and was thus attempting to drag away the body, when the terrible spear of Ajax shattered his helmet, and tore its way to his very brain. Hector hurled a javelin at Ajax, which that hero eluded; but it smote down a brave Phocian chief, Schedius. Other warriors fell rapidly on both sides; and Hector and Æneas, on behalf of Troy, put forth

The Fight for the Body of Patroclus.

their utmost might. But ever the Greeks, with bucklers closely joined and protruding spears bristling like a forest of iron, withstood them and kept firm hold of Patroclus' body.

Meantime the immortal steeds of Achilles, having suffered Automedon to guide them far from Hector's pursuit, now halted, weeping with sorrow for the death of Patroclus and of their mortal comrade Pedasus—slain, as I have told, by the lance of Sarpedon;

nor would they, in obedience to the wishes of the charioteer, either continue their course to the camp or return to the fight, till Jove, pitying their grief, inspired them with a sudden fury which made them wheel and rush toward the enemy. Finding that he could not restrain them, Automedon resigned the reins to another of Achilles' warriors, and himself descended to fight on foot. Hector and Æneas, perceiving the splendid chariot and noble steeds, desisted from their endeavour to capture the body of Patroclus, and hurried to seize the prize that seemed within their reach. Automedon stood firm, and, appealing for help to the Hellenes around, cast his spear, and slew a young Trojan named Aretus. Hector's javelin he dexterously avoided, and it hissed harmlessly over his head, and finally entered deep into the ground. Drawing his sword, Hector was preparing for a closer conflict, when Ajax strode forward, and the Trojan chief shunned the encounter. Piling in the chariot the blood-stained arms of Aretus, which he destined as a sacrifice to the memory of Patroclus, Automedon again ascended to his seat, and this time the horses obeyed the rein.

At the request of Ajax, Menelaus now quitted the desperate struggle still raging round the body of Patroclus, and seeking out Antilochus, the son of Nestor, who was fighting in another part of the field, despatched him to bear to Achilles the mournful intelligence of his kinsman's death; for the Prince of Salamis saw that the battle was slowly but surely going against the Hellenes, and he hoped that at the news of Patroclus' fate, the son of Thetis would himself come forth to their relief. Having discharged his errand the King of Sparta returned to Ajax's side, and

it was arranged that he and Meriones should endeavour to bear away the body, while Ajax defended them from the assaults of the enemy. This plan was carried out, and the mangled corpse was borne along by the two heroes, the Trojans fiercely pursuing, but always held back by the gigantic strength and gleaming sword of the son of Telamon.

In this manner the Greeks slowly retreated toward the ships, their backward march closely attended by the foe, who, with Hector at their head, strove desperately to break their ranks and bear off the body of the hero who had so nobly given his life in his country's cause.

Meanwhile Antilochus had arrived at the tent of Achilles, and in few words imparted his mournful news.

> "Sad tidings, son of Peleus! thou must hear,
> And wretched I, th' unwilling messenger:
> Dead is Patroclus! For his corpse they fight,
> His naked corpse; his arms are Hector's right."

Though Achilles had begun to fear that such a disaster had happened, because the din of battle was again approaching the ships, this confirmation of his worst dread overwhelmed him with sorrow. He threw himself on the earth, and strewed his golden hair and rich garments with ashes, while his attendant slaves were not less vehement in the expression of their grief. Thetis, far away in the abysses of the ocean, heard her son's lamentations, and, with all her sister Nereids, hastened to learn the cause. With groans and tears Achilles informed her of the death of Patroclus, and declared that his own purpose now was revenge.

"'Tis not in fate th' alternate now to give,
Patroclus dead, Achilles hates to live;
Let me revenge it on proud Hector's heart,
Let his last spirit smoke upon my dart:
On these conditions will I breathe; till then
I blush to walk among the race of men."

Thetis ordering the Nereids to descend into the Sea.

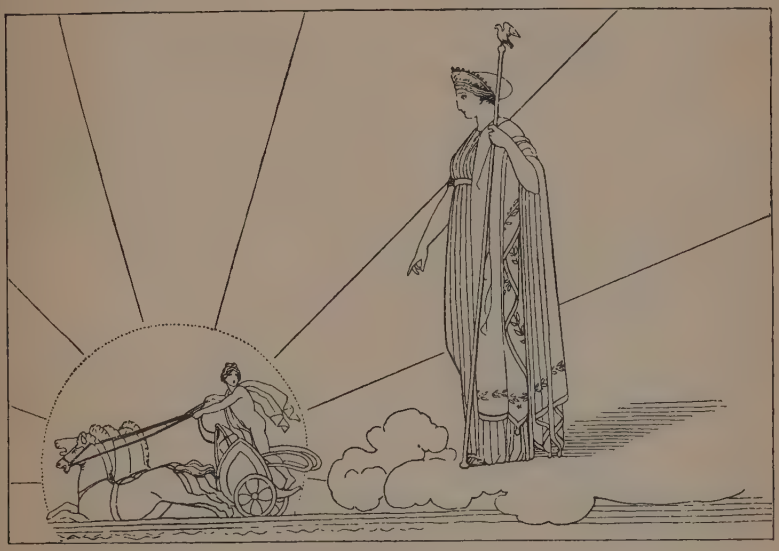
In vain Thetis warned him that if this wish were granted, his own fate would be sealed. He still persisted; declared that he would abandon his quarrel with Agamemnon; and, frantic with grief, called for his arms, that forthwith he might satiate his soul with acts of vengeance. His mother reminded him that his arms were now Hector's prize, and that he could not go forth naked to the

field. But she undertook, by daylight on the following morning, to bring him new armour, the work of Vulcan himself. Then bidding the other Nereids return to their ocean-palace, she took her way toward Olympus.

By this time Menelaus and Meriones, with their mournful burden, had reached the camp. Behind poured the Trojans in a furious torrent; and, in spite of the utmost efforts of Ajax, Hector fought his way up to the corpse. But at the bidding of Juno, Iris now descended from Olympus, and directed Achilles to show himself at the trenches, when the mere sight of his person would be enough to drive back the raging foe in ignominious flight.

"She spoke, and past in air. The hero rose;
The ægis o'er his shoulders Pallas throws:
Around his brow a golden cloud she spread;
A stream of glory flamed above his head.
As, when from some beleaguered town arise
The smokes, high curling to the distant skies
(Seen from some island, on the main afar,
When men distressed hang out the sign of war);
Soon as the sun in ocean hides his rays,
Thick on the hills the flaming beacons rise;
With long-projected beams the seas are bright,
And heaven's high arch reflects the ruddy light:
So from Achilles' head the splendours rise,
Reflecting blaze on blaze against the skies.
Forth marched the chief, and, distant from the crowd,
High on the rampart raised his voice aloud;
With her own shout Minerva swells the sound,
Troy starts astonished, and the shores rebound.
As the loud trumpet's brazen mouth from far

With shrilling clangour sounds th' alarm of war,
Struck from the walls, the echoes float on high,
And the round bulwarks and thick towers reply:
So high his brazen voice the hero reared;
Hosts dropped their arms and trembled as they heard;
And back the chariots roll and coursers bound,
And steeds and men lie mingled on the ground.



Juno commanding the Sun to set.

Aghast they see the living lightnings play,
And turn their eyeballs from the flashing ray.
Thrice from the trench his dreadful voice he raised;
And thrice they fled, confounded and amazed.
Twelve, in the tumult wedged, untimely rushed
On their own spears, by their own chariots crushed;

While, shielded from the darts, the Greeks obtain
The long-contended carcass of the slain."

While Achilles, aided by the other Hellenes, placed the body of his loved Patroclus on a bier, Juno bade the sun descend before his usual time into the ocean; and with the fall of darkness ended the long conflict of that memorable day.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE GOD VULCAN FORGES NEW ARMS FOR ACHILLES—THE RECONCILIATION OF ACHILLES AND AGAMEMNON.

THE Trojans, having retreated, as we have seen, in fright and confusion from the ships, halted in the plain; and while the troops, under the cover of the night, were regaining something of courage and regular order, their chiefs met together in hasty council. Fear and depression were on the faces of most of them; for they perceived that Achilles had ceased his long abstinence from arms, and they knew from bitter experience how irresistible was his might. For some little time no one spoke; but at last Polydamas, who was not less wise in council than brave in war, thus offered his advice:—

"It seems to me, O chiefs, that our most prudent course will be to break up our camp before daybreak. Our position here, so far from the city, is too dangerous. So long as the quarrel continued between Achilles and Agamemnon we had little to fear; but it is plain that the hero has sacrificed his resentment in his desire to avenge the death of his kinsman. Henceforth he will be our fiercest foe, and we have too much reason to dread him in the field. We can no longer hope for victory—in future

we shall have to fight in defence of our homes and our lives. Let us therefore retreat within the walls, and collect all our forces to guard them."

The counsel was wise, but through the secret influences of Minerva, who longed for the downfall of Troy, it was doomed to be rejected.

"What!" cried Hector disdainfully, "would you have us coop our armies again within those walls where they have already been imprisoned for nine long years? During all that time not only did the Hellenes wreak their will on our territories, but savage tribes which otherwise would not have dared to molest us wasted our lands. No! rather let us refresh our warriors, prepare them for the combat, and with to-morrow's dawn lead them again to attack that proud fleet which has to-day so narrowly escaped destruction. Let Achilles himself enter the field; I will encounter him, and abide the fortune of war."

The Trojans greeted this proud speech with shouts of applause, and it was resolved to do as Hector proposed.

Meantime in the Greek camp there was universal mourning for Patroclus. Achilles especially was overwhelmed with sorrow. He bent over the cold body of his friend, embraced it again and again, and indulged in loud lamentations, and vowed that Hector's life should be offered up in expiation, and that twelve Trojan captives should be slaughtered round Patroclus' funeral pyre.

But it is time to follow Thetis on her mission to Olympus. Arrived in the heavenly realms, she sought the lofty, brazen-domed palace of Vulcan. Entering, she found the lame god busy at work among his flaming forges, while his lovely wife

Charis looked on. When Thetis appeared, Charis greeted her with cordial words of welcome, seated her on a silver throne, a noble specimen of the god's handiwork, and informed Vulcan of the visitor's arrival.

"No deity can be more welcome," he replied. "When haughty Juno hurled me, a helpless infant, from the sky, because my

Vulcan and Charis receiving Thetis.

uncouth shape offended her eye, it was Thetis who, with her sister Eurynome, received and fostered me for nine years in a deep cave of ocean.—What can I do, O goddess," he continued, turning to Thetis, "to repay such service? Ask what thou wilt; it will be not only my duty but my joy to grant thy request."

With tears in her eyes Thetis told the story of her son's

sorrows, the death of Patroclus, and Achilles' need of arms wherewith to avenge him.

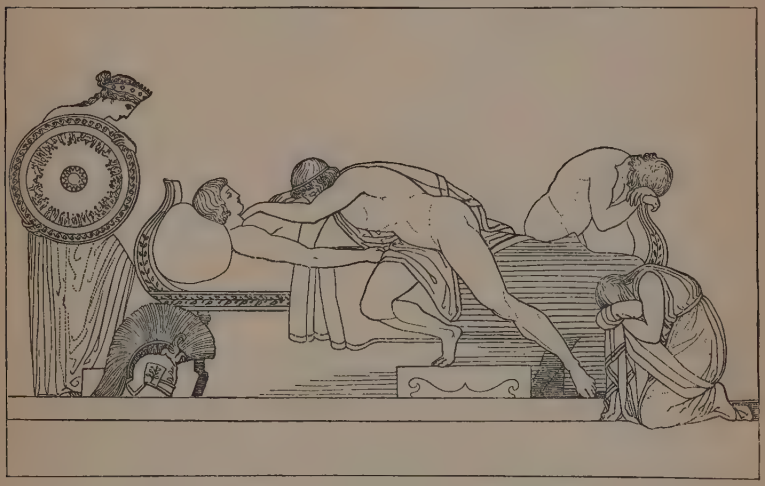
"Arms shall he have," answered Vulcan, "and such as the world never before beheld. Would that I could avert from him also the fate that is impending."

So saying, the immortal smith returned to his forge, and

Thetis and Eurynome cherishing the Infant Vulcan.

twenty furnaces were soon glowing with heat. Then bringing forth great bars of gold, silver, and brass, he plied his hammer and welded the stubborn metals, made pliant by the fierce heat, into the shapes he desired. First he made the massy shield, round in form, and adorned with a series of designs, worked in gold and silver—pictures of peace and war, harvest and hunting

scenes, wrought with such wondrous skill that the figures seemed to breathe and move. Then he shaped the cuirass, the greaves, and the gleaming helmet, richly chased and ornamented. All night the furnace fires roared and the hammer of the god unceasingly clanged, but with the first rays of dawn the task was ended, and Vulcan laid the splendid armour at the feet of Thetis, who, sweeping down from Olympus through the clear morning



Thetis brings to Achilles the Arms forged by Vulcan.

air with the speed of a falcon, bore the glittering burden to the tent of her son.

She found Achilles still mourning over the body of Patroclus. "Suppress this rage of grief, my son," she said, "and remember that not man, but the immortals, struck down thy friend. Behold the arms bestowed on thee by Vulcan—arms fit to grace a god."

He turned, and as he looked upon the radiant armour, his heart began to glow with warlike passion. "These arms," he cried, "are indeed matchless. Now let me hasten to the field."

Thetis advised him first to solemnly renounce, before all the Hellenic leaders, his wrath against Agamemnon; and, in accordance with her suggestion, Achilles called all the kings and chiefs to council. His summons was quickly obeyed; but the band that gathered together bore little resemblance to that which, scarcely a month before, had met on the fatal day of the quarrel between the King of Mycenæ and the son of Thetis. Many of the heroes who had beheld that quarrel were now hushed in the long repose of death; others were feeble and halting from wounds. But every face was bright with hope and expectation, because each one guessed that the purpose of the conference was to declare the end of the strife between the leader of the host and its mightiest warrior. When all were assembled, Achilles rose and spoke,—

"Well would it have been for thee and me, and for all the army, O Agamemnon," he said, "if fair Briseis had died ere the day on which, swayed by mad passion, we fell into contention about her. But she shall breed dissension betwixt us no more. Why should I, who am but mortal, cherish an undying wrath?

> "Here, then, my anger ends: let war succeed,
> And e'en as Greece has bled, let Ilion bleed.
> Now call the hosts, and try if in our sight
> Troy yet shall dare to camp a second night.
> I deem their mightiest, when this arm he knows,
> Shall 'scape with transport, and with joy repose."

This declaration was received by the Greeks with approving shouts, in the midst of which Agamemnon rose, and attributed his injustice toward Achilles to the will of the gods, who had desired to visit the army with calamity. But he would prove the sincerity of his repentance by instantly despatching to the tent of Achilles all the gifts he had offered when he first sought a reconciliation.

"To keep or to send the gifts, O king," replied Achilles, "is as thou dost will. All I ask is that forthwith we resume the war."

But now the prudent Ulysses interposed. He urged that the warriors were wearied with the strife of the past few days, and needed rest and food. He therefore advised that there should be a solemn reconciliation feast, after which the troops would be able to renew the battle with restored strength and courage. Reluctantly Achilles consented that this course should be pursued. The rich treasures and slaves that Agamemnon had promised were then borne to his tent. Last of all the fair Briseis was led thither; and when she beheld the body of Patroclus, she lamented bitterly. Achilles, himself still overcome with grief, would not join in the feasting; but, fearful lest his long fast should weaken his arm, Minerva descended from Olympus and infused heaven-bestowed vigour into his frame.

The feast over, the troops poured forth on to the plain. In the midst, towering above all the rest, marched Achilles, resplendent in the arms forged by Vulcan, and grasping a huge spear which he only, of all the Greeks, was able to wield. Automedon had brought out his chariot, and harnessed to it the immortal

steeds Xanthus and Balius. Achilles, eager for the strife, mounted the car, and addressed the horses:—

"If indeed ye be of immortal blood, be swift to bear me against yonder hated foe, nor leave me lifeless on the field as ye left Patroclus."

Then a wondrous thing happened. Xanthus, inspired by Juno, spoke with a human voice:—

"Achilles! yes—this day at least we bear
Thy rage in safety through the files of war;
But come it will, the fatal time must come:
Not ours the fault, but God decrees thy doom.
Not through our crime, or slowness in the course,
Fell thy Patroclus, but by heavenly force;
The bright, far-shooting god who rules the day
(Confest we saw him) tore his arms away.
No; could our swiftness o'er the winds prevail,
Or beat the pinions of the western gale,
All were in vain—the Fates thy death demand,
Due to a mortal and immortal hand."

Neither the prodigy of his horse's speaking, nor the prediction it uttered, could awe the intrepid soul of Achilles. Fiercely he answered:—

"So let it be!
Portents and prodigies are lost on me.
I know my fate: to die, to see no more
My much-loved parents, and my native shore.
Enough—when Heaven ordains, I sink in night;
'Now perish Troy!' he said, and rushed to fight."

CHAPTER XIV.

THE EXPLOITS OF ACHILLES, THE WARFARE OF THE GODS, AND THE DEATH OF HECTOR.

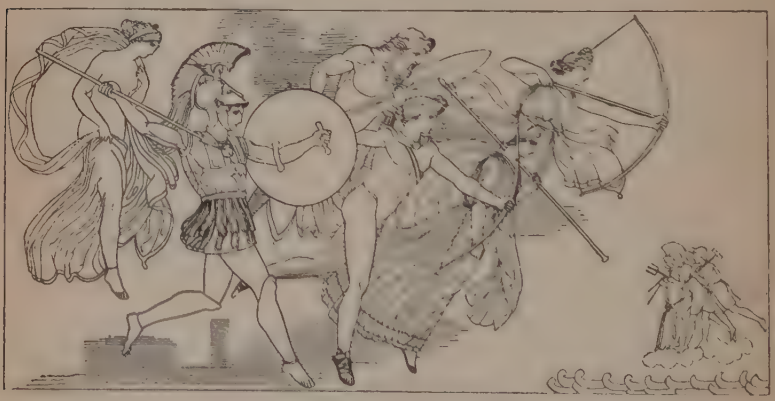
WHILE the two armies were thus gathering on the plain before Troy, Zeus summoned all the gods to council in his splendid palace on Olympus. When the deities had assembled in obedience to his command, he announced that those who willed to take part in the conflict betwixt the Greeks and the Trojans might do so. No time was lost in taking advantage of this permission. Juno, Minerva, Neptune, Mercury, and Vulcan descended to aid the Hellenes; Latona with her children Apollo and Diana, Mars, Venus, and the river-god Xanthus sallied forth to give assistance to the Trojans.

And now the Greeks rushed forward to the attack. Achilles, at their head, tore like lightning through the ranks of the enemy, seeking always for Hector. The warriors of Troy fled before him on all sides, till at last Æneas, incited by Apollo, dared to confront him. When Achilles saw him approach he scornfully exclaimed:—

"Why does Æneas seek to encounter me? Is it in hope to prove thy claim to the throne of Troy when Priam's race shall

have perished, or because the king has promised thee some ample reward for overthrowing me? But hast thou so soon forgotten how, when once before we met, thou didst fly so fast that my spear could not overtake thee?"

"Such words as these," returned Æneas, "might terrify some unwarlike boy. They are unworthy to be addressed to me, a prince of descent not inferior to thine own. To the insults thou hast offered receive this answer."



The Gods descending to Battle.

As he spoke he hurled his spear with all the strength of his arm. It struck with a loud clang on the shield of Achilles, but could not pierce it. Then Achilles in his turn threw his spear, which tore its way through Æneas' shield, and quivered over his shoulder as he stooped to avoid it. With a cry of rage the son of Thetis drew his mighty sword and rushed upon his foe, who must have perished, but that Neptune, taking pity on a prince so

blameless, hid him from Achilles in a mist, and bore him away from the battle-field to a place of safety, where he reproved him for his hardihood in daring to encounter a chief so much mightier than himself. Meanwhile Achilles, full of wrath, exclaimed against the gods for having robbed him of his victim, and then turned furiously to continue his attack against the rest of the Trojans. With sword and spear he struck down warrior after warrior that was rash enough to attempt to oppose him, till, having slain Polydorus, the youngest son of Priam, he at last came face to face with Hector, who advanced, intent to avenge his brother. When Achilles beheld the slayer of Patroclus joy filled his heart. Scanning him with revengeful eyes, he exclaimed, "Come and receive thy fate!"

"I know," Hector undauntedly answered, "that thy force is far greater than mine; but 'tis the gods alone who give success in battle, and perchance they may guide this javelin to thy heart." So saying, he cast his dart, but it was wafted far from its mark by the breath of ever-watchful Minerva. Then Achilles, his eyes glowing with wrath, closed with his hated enemy — only again to be balked, for Apollo concealed the Trojan warrior in a veil of clouds. Thrice the wrathful son of Thetis plunged his spear into the mist to no purpose.

"Wretch!" he cried, "thou hast for the time escaped me through Apollo's aid. Fly, then, coward! but the slaughter of whole hecatombs of thy wretched followers shall be thy punishment."

So saying, he rushed once more into the Trojan ranks, and spread round him such devastation as the war had never

witnessed before that day. Panic-stricken, the warriors of Troy fled in wild confusion. Some hurried toward the protecting walls of the city, others in their terror plunged into the river Scamander. Leaping from his chariot, Achilles dashed into the river after them, and continued to slay the miserable fugitives till his arm grew weary. Then he paused, dragged forth twelve youths alive, bound them, and sent them to his tents to be slain on Patroclus' funeral pyre.

Returning to the river to resume his dreadful work of destruction, the hero met Lycaon, a son of Priam whom he had once before taken captive, and had sold as a slave to a Lemnian prince; from whom, however, he had lately been ransomed, and had but a few days before returned to Troy. When the trembling youth saw Achilles approach he dropped his useless weapons and clasped the chieftain's knees, imploring that his life might be spared. His entreaties were vain.

"Talk not to me of pity," was the stern answer of Achilles. "I remember that Patroclus is dead, and every Trojan I meet shall perish." Then as the unhappy youth clung frantically to his spear, he drew his sword and thrust him through the neck. Hurling the corpse into the stream, he scoffingly asked what the Trojans had gained from the worship they paid to the god of the river, which was now bearing away so many of their bodies unburied to the sea. These words greatly incensed the river-god, who, as Achilles continued remorselessly to ply his sword and lance, and heap the channel with corpses, emerged from his depths and appealed to the hero no longer to choke his stream with the dead. Achilles curtly answered that he would com-

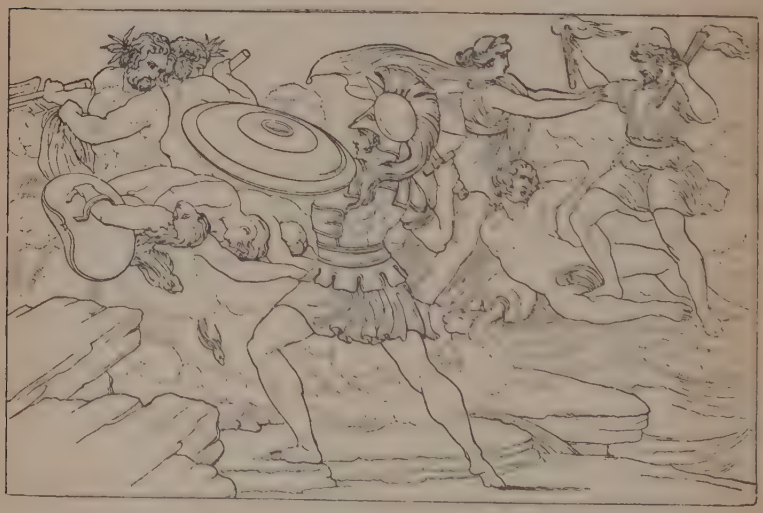
ply with the request when the defeat of the enemy was complete.

Enraged at being treated with such scant respect, the deity gathered all his waters and hurled them foaming at the son of Thetis, who, after a hard struggle, regained the bank. But the swollen torrent pursued him across the plain, rushed furiously wherever he turned, and overtook him in spite of all his speed,

Achilles contending with the Rivers.

while Scamandros summoned his brother deity Simois to lend the aid of his stream in order to overcome this presumptuous mortal that dared to defy a god. Appalled by the spectacle of the huge waves that rushed upon him from every side, Achilles implored the aid of the gods to save him from the wretched fate of drowning; and at the bidding of Juno the god of fire descended on the

plain with a scorching heat that speedily dried up the streams, and compelled the two river deities to sue for mercy and promise no more to strive against Achilles. This pledge given, Vulcan quitted the scene, the rivers resumed their wonted course, and the son of Thetis was free to continue his relentless attack on the warriors of Troy.



Vulcan dries up the Streams.

But now the gods themselves, fired by the scene of carnage spread before them, rushed into combat. Mars first advanced against Minerva, and dashed his mighty spear against her shield. She in return snatched up a huge rock and cast it at the fierce war-god, who fell to the earth with a thundering sound. Scornfully eying him, Pallas exclaimed, "Hast thou not known before

this how far greater is my force than thine? Juno thus by my hand corrects thy rebellion against her will."

Aphrodite, beholding the overthrow of Mars, hastened to his assistance, and tenderly raised him from the plain. Leaning on her arm, he was slowly quitting the scene, when Juno called Minerva's attention to the pair and dared her to pursue them. With a smile the goddess of wisdom overtook the retreating deities, and with a gentle blow on the breast overthrew Venus, while Mars fell at her side. In the meantime Neptune challenged Apollo to combat, reproaching him for taking the side of the descendant of King Laomedon, who, as I have told in a former chapter, had behaved with such insolence and bad faith to both of them. The god of light, however, was in no mood to encounter the gigantic power of the ruler of ocean, second only to that of Jove himself. He therefore declined Neptune's challenge, and retired from the field; whereupon his sister, the proud and cold Diana, bitterly reproached him:—

> "How vain that martial pomp, and dreadful show
> Of pointed arrows, and the silver bow!
> Now boast no more in yon celestial bower
> Thy force can match the great earth-shaking power."

Diana's interference aroused the wrath of Juno. "How darest thou," she exclaimed, "to engage in any quarrel against the queen of heaven? Because Jove has made thee tyrant over the feeble race of womankind, and the conqueror of wild beasts, dost thou presume to engage in strife with deities? Learn in future to be more prudent." So saying, the angry wife of Jove seized

the luckless goddess by the wrists with one hand, while with the other she snatched her bow from her side and chastised her severely with her own weapon. Diana fled weeping to Olympus, and sought the protection of Jove.

While the gods who befriended Greece were thus victorious, the Hellenic troops under the leadership of Achilles were carrying all before them on the field. The hero still raged with unwearied fury, heaping the plain with the Trojan dead. The venerable Priam, who had ascended the ramparts to watch the progress of the battle, saw the terrible spectacle with dismay, and descending to the gates bade the warriors appointed to guard them open them wide to receive the crowd of fugitives, who soon poured through them in panic-stricken disorder. Achilles, who followed close at the rear, might have gained entrance and accomplished the destruction of the city, if Apollo had not succeeded in diverting his attention by assuming the shape of Agenor, one of the sons of Antenor, and luring the son of Thetis to pursue him over the plain till all the flying Trojans were safe within the walls—all save Hector. He, animated by a sudden courage, took his stand before the Scæan gate, and awaited the approach of Achilles.

Having accomplished the object for which he had assumed a mortal shape, Apollo now revealed himself to his pursuer, and tauntingly asked him why he sought to wage war with a god. Achilles angrily complained of the deception which had been practised upon him, and turned towards the city. Priam saw his approach, and perceived with anguish that Hector was preparing to encounter him. With passionate entreaties he begged his son

to retreat within the gate, and Hecuba not less ardently seconded his prayers. But in vain; unconsciously obeying the decrees of fate, Hector remained firm in his purpose. "Can I," he said to himself, "now take refuge in the city, to hear Polydamas tell how, if his counsel had been followed, the disasters and slaughter of this fatal day might have been escaped? It was through my folly that his wise advice was rejected, and I must pay the penalty. No; if I ever re-enter this gate, it must be with the glory of having overcome my country's worst enemy. Or, might I lay down my arms and seek to parley with the son of Thetis? The thought is idle: Achilles knows no mercy, and would strike me down though unarmed."

As these thoughts passed through the mind of the Trojan leader, Achilles approached, stately and terrible as a god, his long spear in his hand, and the god-forged shield glittering across his breast. As Hector beheld him, he was overcome with sudden dread, turned, and fled. Achilles followed him, as the hawk pursues the dove, and with almost equal swiftness. Thrice the two made the circuit of the walls of Troy, the Greek troops looking on with eager interest, but making no attempt to arrest Hector's flight; for Achilles, eager to keep the honour of the victory to himself, signed to them to leave him unmolested. The gods themselves watched the spectacle from the Olympian heights, and Zeus consulted with the other deities whether it would not be desirable to snatch Hector from the impending destruction. But Pallas warmly protested; and thereupon the king of heaven gave her permission to descend and bring the scene to a close. Instantly she swept down to the plain, and approaching Achilles, exultingly

told him that the time of Hector's downfall had come. She bade him cease his pursuit, for she would herself lead the Trojan to his doom.

Achilles obeyed, and stood leaning on his spear, while Minerva, assuming the appearance of Deiphobus, Hector's younger and best-loved brother, drew near the ill-fated chief, and exclaimed.—

"Too long, O Hector, have I beheld the spectacle of thy flight! Let us now, as brothers, make a stand against our foe, and share the same fate.

> "Come, then, the glorious conflict let us try,
> Let the steel sparkle, and the javelin fly:
> Or let us stretch Achilles on the field,
> Or to his arm our bloody trophies yield."

Then the disguised goddess advanced towards Achilles, and Hector, without hesitation, followed. As he approached the son of Thetis, he spoke:—

> "Enough, O son of Peleus! Troy has viewed
> Her walls thrice circled, and her chief pursued;
> But now some god within me bids me try
> Thine or my fate: I kill thee, or I die.
> Yet on the verge of battle let us stay,
> And for a moment's space suspend the day;
> Let Heaven's high powers be called to arbitrate
> The just conditions of this stern debate.
> To them I swear, if victor in the strife,
> Jove by these hands shall shed thy noble life,
> No vile dishonour shall thy corpse pursue;
> Stript of its arms alone (the conqueror's due)

The rest to Greece uninjured I'll restore:
Now plight thy mutual oath—I ask no more."

But Achilles scornfully rejected the proposal:—

"Detested as thou art, and oughtst to be,
Nor oath nor pact Achilles plights with thee.
Such pacts as lambs and rabid wolves combine,
Such leagues as men and furious lions join,
To such I call the gods! one constant state
Of lasting rancour and eternal hate;
No thought but rage and never-ceasing strife,
Till death extinguish rage and thought and life.
Rouse, then, thy forces this important hour,
Collect thy soul, and call forth all thy power;
No further subterfuge, no further chance:
'Tis Pallas, Pallas gives thee to my lance.
Each Grecian ghost by thee deprived of breath,
Now hovers round, and calls thee to thy death."

With this stern defiance he hurled his spear; but Hector, by stooping, eluded it, and it flew over his head. Minerva, unseen by Hector, restored it to Achilles' hand, while the Trojan chief flung his own javelin, which struck on his opponent's shield, and fell blunted to the ground. Hector now called Deiphobus to give him another spear; but there was no answer to his summons. Then, glancing around, he saw that he had been deceived. Still he retained his courage, and drawing his sword, rushed on Achilles, who, guarding himself with his shield, raised his spear and eyed his antagonist to see where he might strike with deadliest effect. The armour that had once been Achilles' own seemed to offer an impregnable defence, but the son of Thetis at last espied an open-

ing at the junction of the plates of mail between his foe's neck and throat. At this place he directed a furious thrust, which pierced Hector with a fatal wound, and stretched him dying on the plain.

"At last," exultingly cried Achilles, "Patroclus is avenged!

"Peaceful he sleeps, with all our rites adorned,
For ever honoured, and for ever mourned;

The Death of Hector.

While, cast to all the rage of hostile power,
Thee birds shall mangle, and the dogs devour."

This threat, peculiarly dreadful to any one holding the common belief of those days, roused the dying Hector to make one more appeal to his relentless foe:—

"By thy own soul! by those who gave thee breath!
By all the sacred prevalence of prayer,
Ah, leave me not for Grecian dogs to tear!
The common rites of sepulture bestow,
To soothe a father's and a mother's woe;
Let their large gifts procure an urn at least,
And Hector's ashes in his country rest."

Andromache fainting on the Wall.

But the implacable Achilles refused the entreaty; and Hector, after warning his conqueror that Paris and Apollo would yet avenge him, expired. The son of Thetis stripped the corpse of its arms, and drew his spear from out the gaping wound it had inflicted; while the Greek warriors gathered round to gaze upon the lifeless body of him who had so often wrought havoc in their

ranks, nor could they refuse their admiration to the manly beauty of the dead hero and the size of his limbs. The thirst for vengeance now prompted Achilles to offer a cruel insult to the corpse. Boring the ankles, he passed a thong through the wounds he made, and then fastened the feet to the back of his chariot, which he drove rapidly round the walls of Troy, thus dragging the body through the dust and mire. Among those who, on the ramparts, were spectators of this dreadful scene were the wretched Priam and Hecuba, who burst out into agonized expressions of their grief. The terrible news of her lord's fate had not yet been borne to Andromache, who was preparing in her palace for Hector's return from the field. The cries of anguish uplifted on the walls at last reached her ear. Full of alarm she hastened forth, mounted the rampart, and saw the body of her noble husband being dragged along the plain by his insulting conqueror. The shock was too great: she sank insensible into the arms of her attendants, and when with some difficulty she had been restored to life, she rent the air with bitter lamentations.

CHAPTER XV.

THE LAST DEEDS AND DEATH OF ACHILLES.

WHILE all Troy was thus sunk in grief and dismay at the death of its bravest defender, Achilles and the Hellenes returned to the camp, bearing with them the disfigured body of Hector. That night the apparition of Patroclus

The Ghost of Patroclus visiting Achilles.

visited Achilles as he lay asleep on the shore near the body of his

friend, and implored that the funeral rites might be performed. The next day an immense funeral pyre was erected on the shore, whereon slaughtered oxen, sheep, horses, dogs, and the twelve Trojans made captive by Achilles were piled round the corpse of Patroclus, and after the customary rites had been performed the whole was fired. Then Achilles invoked the Winds to fan the

Iris summoning the Winds.

flames; and Jove, hearing his prayer, despatched Iris to summon them from their abode in the cave of Æolus. They obeyed the call, and poured their mighty breath upon the pyre, so that the loved remains of Patroclus were soon consumed. Afterwards, the ashes of the dead hero were collected, inurned, and buried; and then Achilles held the funeral games, offering rich prizes, for which

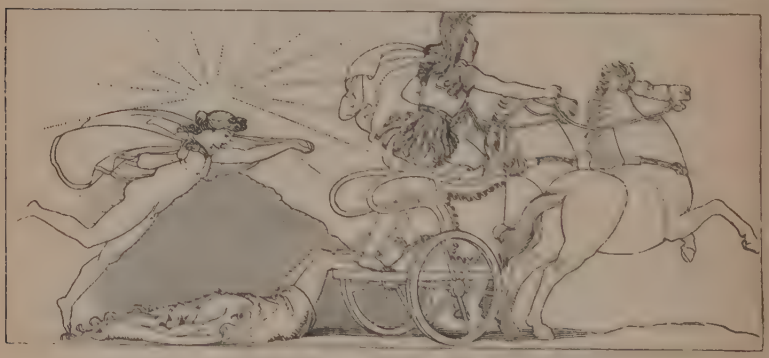
the foremost of the Grecian chiefs did not think it unworthy of their rank to contend. The chariot-race was won, after a hard struggle, by Diomedes; the contest with the cestus or gauntlets by Epeus. Ulysses and the greater Ajax proved so equal in wrestling that the son of Thetis divided the prize between them; but in the foot-race the Ithacan chief, with the help of Minerva, was victorious.

The Winds blowing on the Pyre.

The body of Hector still lay unhonoured and naked by Achilles' tent; but Apollo watched over it with pitying care, and preserved it from corruption, even when Achilles again dragged it behind his chariot round the walls of Troy. At last the gods took compassion on the dead hero, who had ever offered due honours to them while alive. At the bidding of Jove, conveyed

by Iris to Thetis as she sat mourning amid her nymphs, Achilles consented to give up the body to the Trojans on the payment of a proper ransom; and Iris, descending to Troy, commanded Priam to visit the son of Thetis in his tents, and himself ask for his son's body. The venerable king obeyed, and his embassy was successful. Further, at his request Achilles granted a truce of twelve days, that the funeral ceremonies might be properly performed.

The truce ended, the war was resumed, but the Trojans were



Apollo preserving Hector's Body.

now careful to keep behind their impregnable ramparts, and the capture of their city seemed as far off as ever. Their courage was, however, renewed by the arrival of some unexpected allies. Far inland, among the mountain regions of Asia, dwelt a nation of female warriors who were called the Amazons, whose prowess in battle was such that they had long been dreaded by all the surrounding peoples. One of the most famous deeds achieved by Hercules had been his invasion of the country of the Amazons, to

capture a magic girdle belonging to their queen Hippolyta; nor was it until after a terrible combat that he was able to overcome her and bear away the girdle. The Trojans themselves had more than once experienced the warlike might of the Amazons. But now, when reports were borne to these fierce women-warriors of the great deeds of the Hellenes, and especially of the irresistible prowess of Achilles, they began to fear lest, when Troy was sub-

Iris bearing to Thetis the Command of Jove.

dued, their own country might be invaded. They determined, therefore, to give help to King Priam; and a great army of them, under the command of their queen, Penthesilea, entered the city.

Penthesilea was a daughter of the god of war, and she had inherited all his love of combat and blood. Yet was she young

and beautiful and majestic as a goddess, so that men were not less eager to obey her commands and follow her to battle than the female warriors, her subjects. Not at all was she minded to remain shut up within the walls of Troy while the Grecian army was ready for conflict on the wide plain without; and the Trojans forgot the dread with which Achilles had inspired them when they found their cause championed by so formidable a warrior.

Iris commands Priam to go to the Greek Camp.

They and the Amazons accordingly poured forth from the gates, and challenged the Hellenes to battle.

A furious struggle ensued. Many a brave Grecian warrior sank beneath the spears and arrows of the Amazons, who, with the strength of men, possessed a fiery courage that was all their own. But in the Hellenic chieftains, Ajax, Ulysses, and the Atrides, they encountered enemies more formidable than they had ever met before; and their queen, though she might have equalled

any of these heroes in prowess, disdained to meet them. Her ambition was to overcome Achilles, and avenge the death of Hector. The son of Thetis was not eager for the combat; to him it seemed a humiliation to war with a woman. But wherever he turned on the field, Penthesilea always confronted him, and taunted him to the encounter with bitter words. Enraged by her scoffs, he turned upon her at last.

Priam entreating Achilles.

"Since thou art bent upon thy fate, O queen!" he exclaimed, "it shall be as thou wilt."

Penthesilea first threw her javelin, which struck, though it could not penetrate, his gleaming helmet. Nevertheless the blow was so violent that Achilles tottered, and only kept his footing

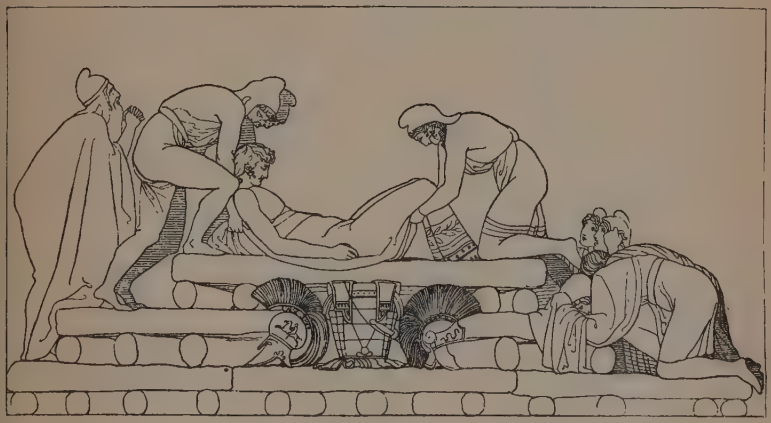
with the help of his spear. This he now cast at his beautiful enemy, with such force that her shield was shattered to fragments, though she herself was unhurt. Seeing her defenceless, and filled with admiration at the charms of her noble countenance and exquisite form, the son of Thetis would have turned aside and permitted her to escape. But Penthesilea scorned to accept mercy

The mourning over the Body of Hector.

at his hands. Drawing her sword, she rushed upon him, and assailed him with furious blows, which he only warded off with difficulty. At last, perceiving that the fiery Amazon was bent on his destruction, he struck in his turn, and his irresistible sword pierced her cuirass, and laid her mortally wounded on the earth.

"Thou hast conquered, O Achilles," she faintly exclaimed as the victor stood over her; "but since I am doomed to perish on this foreign shore, I implore thee, by all thou holdest dear on earth, that thou wilt not dishonour my body, but restore it to my Amazons for decent burial."

Achilles, filled with sorrow, raised her gently in his arms, sought vainly to stop the torrent of blood that flowed from her



The Funeral of Hector.

wound, and swore to grant her request. In another moment she sank back dead. The combat had been watched by the warriors of both armies; and as Achilles, in fulfilment of his promise, was about to give up the body of his brave and beautiful foe to her followers, Thersites, who chanced to be near, ventured to indulge in scornful sneers against him for being thus tender to his enemy.

"However mighty in arms," he said, "it is easy to see that Achilles can be conquered by a woman's arts. But why should the body of this female fury be more respected than that of Hector?" and as he spoke he thrust his spear into the lifeless form of Penthesilea. It was an unlucky act for him: Achilles, blazing with wrath, turned upon the foul-tongued wretch, and with one terrible blow of his clenched hand struck him lifeless on the ground.

There was not one warrior in the Hellenic army who pitied Thersites, or felt that his fate was undeserved. But it happened that he was connected by ties of blood to Diomedes, and the proud King of Argos, deeming himself bound in honour to perform the duties of kinship, demanded that Achilles should pay the fine which by the law of the Hellenes was affixed as the penalty of the act he had committed. Achilles rejected the demand with disdain. Diomedes, not less haughty, answered him with reproaches and threats; and since Agamemnon, in his capacity as leader of the Hellenes, refused to decide that his claim was unjust, a fresh dissension arose in the Grecian camp. Infuriated to the last degree at what he deemed the ingratitude of the Hellenes, Achilles withdrew with his Myrmidons from the army and set sail for Lesbos. Thus it seemed that once more the enterprise against Troy was doomed to fail on the eve of triumph. But such was not the will of the gods. Inspired by Minerva, Ulysses succeeded in persuading Diomedes to depart from his claim, and then he followed Achilles and induced him to return.

Well was it for the Hellenes that this reconciliation was

accomplished; for an adversary more terrible than any they had yet encountered now took the field against them. This was Memnon, prince of the Ethiopians, and nephew of King Priam. He was the son of Tithonus, king of the far-off land of Ethiopia, and of Aurora or Eos, goddess of the morning. His mother had obtained for him, as Thetis had done for Achilles, a suit of armour forged by Vulcan; and the prince had won, by his valour and his blameless life, the especial favour of Zeus. He now came to Troy at the head of a great army of Ethiopian warriors, and the command of the whole forces of the city was bestowed upon him.

Against such a foe it behoved the Greeks to put forth all their strength. The two armies encountered with great fury, and for a long time the victory inclined to neither. On the one side Achilles, and on the other Memnon, carried destruction into the ranks opposed to them. At last the Ethiopian prince inflicted a severe blow on the Hellenes by slaying Antilochus. The brave son of Nestor encountered Memnon against the advice of his father: he fought with the greatest skill and courage, but was pierced to the heart by his antagonist's spear. Dismayed by this catastrophe, the Greeks implored Achilles to arrest the destruction that was being dealt on all sides by the Ethiopian chief. The son of Thetis hastened to meet an opponent so worthy of his arms. As the two heroes approached each other, Thetis and Eos hurried to Olympus, each to plead with Zeus in the cause of her son. Thus appealed to, the king of the gods determined to leave the issue with the Fates. He held up the golden scales which revealed their decision, and that

which was charged with the fortunes of Memnon touched the earth.

The issue of the combat was in accordance with this portent. After a long and desperate struggle, Memnon was at last slain by Achilles. His sorrowing mother bore off his body, and honoured it with funeral rites; but she was inconsolable for his loss, and wept without ceasing; and the old Greek poets prettily speak of the morning dews as the tears of Eos for her ill-fated son.

But the triumphs and the life of Achilles were now nearly ended. Completely dismayed by the fall of Memnon, the Trojans and their allies fled hastily toward the city. Achilles and the Hellenes pursued, and the hero was on the point of forcing an entrance at the Scæan gate along with the flying crowd, when Paris, at the bidding of Apollo, aimed an arrow at him, which was guided by the god so that it pierced his only vulnerable part—his heel. Achilles knew that he was mortally wounded, but he continued to fight furiously, piling the ground with Trojan corpses, till at last he sunk lifeless. On seeing the fall of their dreaded enemy, the Trojans regained courage, and endeavoured to capture his body: but their efforts were defeated by the valour of Ajax and Ulysses; they were driven within their ramparts, and the body borne back to the camp. There it was received by the sorrowing Thetis; and the funeral rites of their bravest champion were celebrated with great pomp and bitter grief by all the Hellenes. At the funeral games, the rich spoils which Achilles had won during the war were given as prizes; but it was determined that the splendid armour forged by

Vulcan should be given to him who had done the most to rescue Achilles' corpse from the enemy. The competitors, therefore, were Ajax and Ulysses; and when the votes of those who had been present at the conflict were taken, it was found that the prize had been awarded to the Ithacan chief. Ajax had been confident that the decision would be in his favour: his rage and grief were so intense that he lost his reason. In his delirium he rushed out of his tent, sword in hand, and slaughtered a flock of sheep that he chanced to meet, under the impression that they were enemies. While thus engaged his frenzy suddenly left him, and he was so overpowered with shame at the follies he had committed that he thrust his sword through his own heart.

Thus within the space of a few days the Hellenes were deprived of the two warriors of whom the Trojans had stood most in dread. It was true that the latter had themselves suffered such cruel disasters that they again kept strictly within their walls; but those walls were so strong and so well guarded that the besiegers seemed no nearer to the attainment of their object than they had been at the beginning of the long ten years of war.

CHAPTER XVI.

THE WOODEN HORSE—THE CAPTURE AND DESTRUCTION OF TROY.

BUT that which all the fierce courage and warlike skill of Achilles had been unable to bring about was now destined to be accomplished by the wisdom and the cunning of Ulysses. That crafty chieftain was aware of the power of interpreting the will of the gods which was possessed by Helenus, the brother of Cassandra, and he determined if possible to capture the prince, and compel him to make known the means by which his father's city could be taken. With this purpose in view, Ulysses induced Agamemnon to direct that the Hellenes should keep close in their camp, and should busy themselves in refitting their ships, as though they intended to abandon their enterprise. Seeing the inactivity of the besiegers, the Trojans began to venture outside their gates, though only in the light of day, and when they were sure that no sudden attack could be made upon them. As, however, nothing was done to molest them, they grew bolder, and their parties advanced further from the walls. There was on Mount Ida a temple of Apollo, which had been a favourite resort of Helenus before the war,

and thither the prince again began to repair. Several times he was permitted to go and return in safety; but one day Ulysses, with a band of Grecian warriors, surrounded the temple while he was within, and as soon as he came forth he was made prisoner.

Helenus was at once taken to the camp, and led before the assembled chiefs, where the stern Ulysses informed him that unless he at once revealed what it was necessary to do in order to capture Troy, he should be put to death. If the captive had been endowed with the heroic spirit of his brother Hector, he would have preferred death to the betrayal of his country. But his courage was not equal to the ordeal. Having obtained from Agamemnon a solemn oath that his life should be spared if he revealed the secret, he said that three things must be done before the Greeks could capture Troy. The son of Achilles must be brought to the camp to fight in the Hellenic ranks; the arrows of Hercules must be used against the Trojans, because by them only could Paris be slain, and so long as he lived Troy could not be taken; and, finally, the Palladion—that image of Minerva which, as you will remember, had been granted by Jove himself to the founder of the city—must come into the possession of the besiegers.

None of these were very easy conditions, but Ulysses set himself with characteristic energy and perseverance to fulfil them. He knew that the young son of Achilles and of Deidamia, daughter of the King of Scyros — the island where Achilles had been concealed before the war began—was dwelling with his grandfather; so he forthwith sailed to Scyros,

and easily induced the young hero, who was named Pyrrhus, to return with him. Pyrrhus much resembled his father, in manly beauty, in strength, and in fondness for war. He was eager to avenge Achilles' death; and in a skirmish with the Trojans that took place shortly after he joined the army, he showed the Greeks how valuable an ally they had got, by slaying a formidable warrior named Eurypylus, the son of King Telephus of Mysia, who had long since returned to the side of Troy.

The next task was to induce Philoctetes, who possessed the bow and arrows of Hercules, to rejoin the comrades who had so cruelly banished him to the desert island of Lemnos ten years before. Even from this difficult undertaking Ulysses did not shrink. Taking Diomedes with him he sailed to Lemnos, where they found Philoctetes still suffering terrible anguish from the wound which one of his arrows had by mischance inflicted on him. During the long years of his exile he had led a miserable life in a cave by the sea-shore, supporting himself as best he could by the chase. At first he received the two chiefs with torrents of reproaches, and refused to comply with their request; but on learning that if he returned to the camp his wound could be cured, he began to relent, and at last consented to accompany Ulysses and Diomedes back to the Trojan shore. As soon as he arrived there, he was thrown into a deep sleep by the power of Æsculapius, the god of the healing art; and while he was in this state the great physician Machaon cut out the poisoned flesh from his foot, and dressed it with so much skill that when Philoctetes woke, his cure was already completed.

He immediately took the field with the rest of the Hellenes. Paris, who had been emboldened by his continuous escape from all injury during the war, and who believed himself secure through the protection extended to him by Aphrodite, now frequently led the Trojans in their sallies against the besiegers; and as his strength of arm and skill in warfare were very great, he had begun to be regarded with greater esteem by his countrymen. But the hour of his doom had now arrived. Going forth as usual one day to encounter the Hellenes, he was met by Philoctetes, who pierced his shoulder with one of the fatal darts of Hercules. The unhappy prince was carried back to Troy suffering fearful tortures. In this time of his misery, he thought no more of the Grecian dame for whose sake he had plunged two great nations into a destructive war; he remembered the beautiful Œnone, the injured wife whom he had deserted on Mount Ida so many years before, and whose skill in the healing art was scarcely inferior to that of Machaon himself. He contrived to have a message sent to her imploring her aid. But Œnone, filled with the sense of the wrong she had endured at his hands, refused to come to his help; and when he had heard her answer, Paris abandoned all hope of life—he turned his face to the wall and died in mute despair. Too late, Œnone repented her refusal, and made her way into Troy, only to find the body of her faithless lord laid on the funeral pyre, which was already burning. Overcome with sorrow and remorse, she threw herself on the corpse, and perished in the flames.

One other condition remained to be fulfilled, and that was the most difficult of all,—namely, the removal from Troy of the Palladion. To accomplish this, Ulysses in the first place dis-

guised himself as an old beggar, and contrived to get into the city, in order to find out where the sacred image was preserved. His disguise effectually deceived the Trojans, but failed to conceal his true identity from the keen eyes of Helen. She, however, was not at all inclined to betray the Grecian chief. She ardently longed to return to Greece; for though she had ever been treated with kindness by Priam and all his house, she was hated by the Trojan people as the cause of all their woes. After the death of Paris, she had been obliged to become the wife of Deiphobus, whom she did not love. In the hope that if she assisted in the downfall of the city she might be forgiven by Menelaus, she managed to obtain a private meeting with Ulysses, told him where the Palladion was concealed, and undertook to assist him in gaining possession of it if he could return for that purpose with some of his comrades. Ulysses safely withdrew from the city, and two or three days later came back again accompanied by Diomedes, whose courage and coolness made him the chosen companion of the Ithacan chief in enterprises of danger. True to her word, Helen aided the two heroes to enter the city and to bear off the Palladion without the knowledge of those appointed to guard it.

The three conditions enumerated by Helenus having now been complied with, Agamemnon summoned a solemn council of all the Hellenic leaders to decide what should next be done. The walls of Troy still stood as firm as ever, and apparently its downfall was no nearer than before; but, inspired by Minerva, Ulysses now propounded a scheme which was full of craft, and which it was unanimously resolved to carry out. The chief Epeus, who when in his own country had been famous for his skill in sculp-

ture, was directed to construct a gigantic wooden horse. When it was finished, a large number of the best warriors, under the leadership of Pyrrhus, concealed themselves in the hollow inside of the huge image. Then the rest of the Grecks, striking their tents and levelling the fortifications of their camp, launched their ships into the sea and set sail—apparently for Greece; but in reality they only proceeded to the island of Tenedos, a few miles from the coast, under the shelter of which they cast anchor, and anxiously awaited the signal for return. They had left behind only the great wooden horse and one young warrior named Sinon, who had been well instructed beforehand in the part he had to play.

With anxiety and hope had the Trojans beheld from their ramparts the proceedings of the Greeks. When at last their sails had disappeared below the horizon, the people, confident that their persevering assailants had at last given up their enterprise in despair, poured out of the city in great numbers to view the site of the camp, and especially to examine the huge wooden figure, the purpose of which they were unable to understand. While they were gazing upon it, and discussing what should be done with it, Sinon was found lurking amid the ruins of the camp, and was brought a prisoner before the Trojan chiefs. Trembling with affected fear, he told a false story to the effect that he was a kinsman of Palamedes, and therefore a peculiar object of the hatred of Ulysses; that the latter had contrived to bring about the choice of him as a sacrifice to the gods in order to secure the safe return of the ships to Greece; and that to avoid this fate, he had escaped from the tent where he had

been confined, and concealed himself till after the departure of his countrymen.

Believing Sinon's story, King Priam promised him his life, and asked him what was the object with which the Hellenes had reared the huge wooden horse. Sinon, pretending to be willing in his gratitude to betray the secrets of the Greek leaders, explained that the reason why they had abandoned the siege was because Minerva had manifested her resentment for the theft by Ulysses of the Palladion, and had ordered them through Calchas to return to Greece. In obedience to the soothsayer, also, they had constructed this image to appease the goddess; and they had made it of such enormous size because they hoped that in that case the Trojans would be unable to drag it within their walls. For Calchas, he said, had declared that if the Trojans destroyed or insulted the figure, the wrath of Pallas would descend upon them; whereas, if they could carry it uninjured into their city, it would be a new Palladion, and would insure the eternal greatness of Troy and the ruin of Greece.

This artful tale completely beguiled most of the Trojans, and they clamoured loudly to have a portion of the walls pulled down —since the image was too bulky to be dragged through the gates —in order that the new Palladion might be conveyed to the Temple of Minerva in the citadel. Only two voices were raised against this proposal. Cassandra poured forth terrible predictions of the ruin that would follow if the wooden horse were brought within the walls; but, as usual, her warnings were altogether unheeded. Laocoon, a priest of Neptune, was still more energetic in his protestations.

"I fear any gift that comes from Greece," he exclaimed. "That gigantic figure either encloses some of our enemies within its hollow sides, or else it is a new engine of war devised by the craft of Ulysses to batter down our walls." With these words he hurled his spear at the horse. The weapon pierced deep into its side, from which issued a clash as of armour, and a sound which was the irrepressible exclamation of the warriors concealed within. Whether this might have led to the detection of the plot is uncertain; but the attention of the Trojans was now diverted by a terrible spectacle. Suddenly two huge serpents emerged from the sea, and with high-lifted heads, glaring eyes, and vast distended jaws, advanced to Laocoon, who, having reared an altar, was engaged with his two sons in offering up a sacrifice to Neptune. Coiling their huge bodies round the unhappy man and his boys, they crushed them to death in their terrible folds.

The Trojans at once recognized in this wonderful event an omen that the story which Sinon had related was true, and regarded the death of Laocoon as the just punishment which had overtaken him for daring to offer an outrage to the image erected in honour of Minerva. At once, with frantic zeal, they set about making a huge breach in the wall, through which the immense image was dragged by thousands of willing hands into the heart of the city.

The rest of the day was spent in feasting; but in the dead of the following night, while the Trojan warriors were sunk in the deep sleep that had followed on their free indulgence in wine, Sinon kindled a beacon-fire as a signal to the Greeks, who were waiting on board their ships at Tenedos. That done, he opened a

secret door in the body of the wooden horse, and released the warriors concealed within. Then followed a terrible scene of ruin and destruction. Pouring through the breach in the ramparts made to admit the fatal horse, the Greeks carried fire and slaughter throughout the city, while Pyrrhus and his comrades were equally active in the work. Some of the Trojans under the leadership of Æneas offered a sturdy resistance for a time, but their efforts were unavailing. Most of them fell under the swords of the Greeks or were taken captive. Æneas, with his father Anchises and his son Ascanius, at last contrived to escape, and quitted the Trojan shores with a scanty band of followers on a long voyage of adventure, destined to land him at last on Italy, where, according to tradition, one of his descendants founded the great city of Rome. The venerable King Priam himself, and most of his surviving sons, perished by the hand of Pyrrhus, who was as unrelenting in battle as his father had been. The Trojan women were divided as captives among the Greek leaders, Cassandra falling to the share of Agamemnon, and Andromache to Pyrrhus, who offered up Polyxena, the youngest and one of the fairest of Priam's daughters, in sacrifice on the tomb of Achilles. Menelaus slew Deiphobus and recovered his wife, the fair Helen, whom he pardoned and conducted to his ship. The destruction of Troy was complete. All its noble buildings were destroyed by fire; and of the mighty ramparts erected by Neptune for King Laomedon not one stone was suffered to remain upon another.

Thus after lasting for ten years, and involving the death of many of the greatest heroes of both nations, and uncounted multitudes of common men, ended the Trojan War. The crime com-

mitted by Paris at the instigation of Aphrodite had been expiated only at the cost of his own life, with others far more precious, and of the destruction of his country. But though the Greeks were victorious, their triumph had been bought very dearly, nor were their leaders destined soon to enjoy the fruits of these long years of toil and warfare.

CHAPTER XVII.

THE FATE OF THE HELLENIC CHIEFS AFTER THE WAR.

THE war being ended, the Hellenic chiefs held a last council, to determine how best they should return home with the captives and spoil they had taken. Agamemnon proposed that before they set sail they should offer solemn sacrifices, to obtain the favour of the gods. Menelaus, on the other hand, having recovered his wife, whose unfaded beauty had restored all his old love for her, was eager to return at once to Sparta, and opposed any delay. About half of the kings and their warriors sided with Menelaus, and departed accordingly. The others, amongst whom Ulysses was the chief, remained with the King of Mycenæ till the propitiatory sacrifices had been offered up, when they too left the shore which had witnessed so many memorable events.

It seemed as though Agamemnon's intercession with the gods for a favourable homeward voyage had not, in his own case, been made in vain. With his war-worn followers and his beautiful and gifted slave Cassandra he reached Mycenæ in safety. But during his absence his queen, Clytemnestra, who had been filled with wrath against him because of the manner in which he had

beguiled her of their daughter Iphigenia, had become the wife of his kinsman and hereditary enemy Ægisthus, who had acted during the whole time of Agamemnon's absence as King of Mycenæ. When the guilty pair heard of Agamemnon's return they at once determined on his destruction. Clytemnestra pretended to be overjoyed to see him, and gave him a most tender greeting; but her warm words did not deceive Cassandra, who warned Agamemnon that evil was intended against him. Now, however, as always, the warning was disregarded. The king, with his fair slave and his chief warriors, sat down to enjoy a splendid banquet which Clytemnestra caused to be spread for them; and while they were in the midst of their feasting, and had laid aside all their arms except their swords, Ægisthus and a band of his followers burst in upon them. All were slain; but they fought desperately for their lives, and Ægisthus was the only survivor of that terrible banquet of blood. Having thus destroyed the king, Ægisthus and the infamous Clytemnestra would also have killed Orestes, the young son of Agamemnon. But the boy was saved by the foresight of his sister Electra, who, while the dreadful tragedy of her father's murder was being consummated, sent Orestes away to Phocis, where he was received and brought up by Strophius, the king of that country, with whose son Pylades he formed a close friendship. As soon as he reached manhood, Orestes devoted himself to the task of avenging the murder of Agamemnon. He and Pylades came in disguise to Mycenæ, where he made himself known to Electra, and was by her admitted into the palace. Then with his own hand he slew the wicked Clytemnestra and Ægisthus. But though the death of Clytemnestra was

well deserved, gods and mortals alike were shocked that the deed should have been perpetrated by her own son; and the unhappy Orestes was haunted by the Furies—or, as we should say now-a-days, by the pangs of remorse—until he repaired to the famous oracle of Delphi, and was there instructed to be purified of the crime by the Court of the Areopagus at Athens, and afterwards

Death of Agamemnon and Cassandra.

to go to the Temple of Artemis in Tauris. Orestes obeyed the oracle, and, still accompanied by the faithful Pylades, proceeded to Tauris. There he found and became known to his sister Iphigenia, who had been conveyed thither eighteen years before by the goddess from the altar of sacrifice at Aulis. She contrived the escape of her brother and his friend, as well as her own, from the inhos-

pitable land of Tauris, and they all arrived in safety at Mycenæ, where Orestes reigned for many years in peace and security.

The fate of Menelaus was not so cruel as that of Agamemnon, but his homeward journey was much longer and more eventful. Storms sent by the gods drove his ships from their proper course, and for eight years he wandered about the eastern Mediterranean coasts, visiting Cyprus, Phœnicia, Libya, and Egypt. In the last-named country he was detained for a long time by adverse winds, and during his stay encountered a sea-nymph named Eidothea, the daughter of Proteus, one of the lesser gods of the deep, who possessed the power of foretelling future events. But he was very reluctant to exercise this power; and if any mortal laid hold of him to compel him to make revelations, he was wont incessantly to change his form, in order to escape their hands: hence, to this day, men and women who can put on many different expressions are said to have Protean countenances. Menelaus was eager to know his own destiny, and the fate of the other leaders in the war; and by the advice of Eidothea he concealed himself on the sea-shore, close to the spot where Proteus was accustomed to come forth and sleep in the rays of the mid-day sun. In due course the sea-god made his appearance, and Menelaus seized him in a firm embrace. In vain did Proteus in turn assume the shape of a furious lion, a leopard, a savage wild boar, a huge dragon, and even a running stream and a stately palm-tree. Menelaus, instructed by Eidothea, never relinquished his grip, so that the baffled deity was at last obliged to return to his own form, and to reply to the eager questions of the King of Sparta. He learned the reason of the

long delays on his voyage—neglect to offer proper sacrifices to the gods; and he was also informed that he would return safely home. Proteus likewise revealed to him the miserable end of his brother Agamemnon, and some circumstances respecting others of the Hellenic leaders. In accordance with his prediction, Menelaus soon afterwards safely arrived at Sparta, where his reign subsequently was happy and peaceful.

Menelaus listening to the Revelations of Proteus.

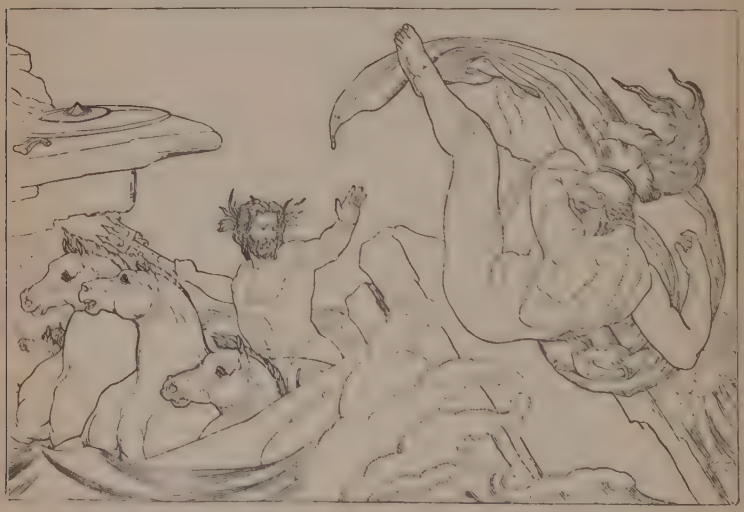
Diomedes, the hero in all the Hellenic army who, next to Achilles, had performed the greatest exploits during the war, had a quick and uneventful journey, like Agamemnon, to his native kingdom; but, like him, he returned to encounter misfortune. Aphrodite had never forgiven Diomedes for having wounded her

before Troy, and she had avenged herself by causing his wife Ægiale, of whom he was passionately fond, to weary of his absence and take another husband. When the luckless hero learned this, he made no attempt to punish his faithless wife, but turned his back on his home and his kingdom for ever. Re-embarking on board his ships, he and his warriors allowed the winds to carry them where they would, and eventually landed on the coast of Daunia, a country of Italy. There Diomedes gave valuable aid to the king in his wars with his neighbours, married his daughter, and succeeded to the throne on his death, attaining himself to an extreme old age.

The venerable Nestor, protected by the good-will of all the immortals, returned safely from Troy to his kingdom of Pylos, where, notwithstanding his age and the grief he suffered for the death of his brave son Antilochus—who, it will be remembered, had been slain by Memnon—he lived and reigned tranquilly for many years.

A less happy lot was that of Idomeneus of Crete. His voyage had almost been completed in safety, and he was already within sight of the harbour of his capital, when a furious storm arose, which threatened the destruction of his fleet. In his alarm, Idomeneus vowed to sacrifice to Neptune whatever he should first meet on landing, if the god would but grant him a safe arrival. The storm immediately subsided; but when Idomeneus set his foot on shore, the first person who came to meet him was his only son, the heir to his kingdom. The unhappy king was filled with consternation; but the youth himself, on learning its cause, urged that the vow should be fulfilled; and Idomeneus

accordingly bound him, laid him on the altar, and sacrificed him with his own hand. But some of the gods were filled with horror at this act, and in punishment of it visited Crete with a terrible pestilence. The people, on learning from an oracle that the deed committed by Idomeneus was the cause of this calamity, drove the unfortunate monarch from the country, to which he



Death of Ajax Oileus.

had but just returned after so long an absence. Idomeneus, accompanied by a band of devoted followers, sailed westward, and landed in Southern Italy, where he founded a new kingdom; and here at last he found rest and peace.

Ajax, the son of Oileus and Prince of the Locrians, came to a terrible end very soon after the fall of Troy. During the

destruction of the city he had profaned the Temple of Minerva, by dragging Cassandra from its altar, where she had taken refuge. On his homeward voyage the offended goddess caused his ship to be wrecked in a fearful storm. Ajax, with the aid of Neptune, succeeded in reaching a rock; and there, in his wrath at beholding the loss of his vessel, he cursed the immortals, and swore that he would gain his home in despite of their persecutions. His impiety was swiftly punished. Neptune, enraged at his insolence, smote the rock with his trident: it disappeared beneath the waves, and Ajax perished in the boiling waters.

I have now told of the fate of all the principal Grecian heroes except Ulysses; but the adventures of that celebrated chief were so many and important that they form a separate history of themselves, which I am about to narrate in the second part of this book.

PART II.—THE WANDERINGS OF ULYSSES.

CHAPTER I.

ULYSSES' ADVENTURES WITH THE LOTOS-EATERS AND THE CYCLOPS.

WHEN at length Ulysses turned his ships' prows homeward from Troy, he was full of bright hope that he might speedily again embrace the dear wife Penelope, and the son—now grown from infancy to boyhood—from whom he had so unwillingly parted more than ten years before. His ships were heaped high with treasures, won at the taking of Troy, which already, in his thoughts, he had arranged in the halls of his palace at Ithaca; nor did he dream that all these rich spoils were destined, along with his brave comrades, to be engulfed in the depths of the sea, and that he himself was destined to encounter greater perils and hardships than any he had faced during the long and bloody war just ended.

At first his little fleet, numbering twelve vessels, was borne by the winds towards the coast of Thrace, and anchored off the town of Ismarus, in the country of the Ciconi, a Thracian tribe

which had long been hostile to the Hellenes. The town was not strongly fortified, and the followers of Ulysses, eager to increase their spoils, proposed to land and sack it. He himself would have chosen to continue the voyage at once; but in those days the authority of a chief over his followers, though in some ways very great, was in others just as lax; and the Ithacan warriors, flushed with recent conquest, were not inclined to be very obedient to their king. He deemed it best, therefore, to consent to their proposal; landed with his troops, and speedily overcame the resistance of the unfortunate people of Ismarus. Most of the men were slaughtered, though a few escaped: their wives and their riches fell to the share of the victors. Ulysses now anxiously desired his men to bring their spoils on board ship, and sail away before the whole country was roused against them. But his commands and entreaties were vain; the rough soldiers, determined to enjoy themselves, killed cattle and sheep, made a great feast, drank bowls of wine, and wasted their time in riot. Meanwhile, those of the townsmen who had escaped spread the alarm of the invasion, as Ulysses had foreseen, among all the neighbouring peoples, who took to arms, and descended upon the Ithacans in such numbers that the latter, after losing many of their warriors, were obliged to retreat empty-handed to their ships.

Scarcely had the fleet gained the open sea when a violent storm arose, which compelled them to take refuge in a bay surrounded by a naked and inhospitable shore. Here they remained for two days; then they again put forth, but were borne by adverse winds for ten days along an unknown sea. At the end

of that time they cast anchor on a beautiful coast, where the land was clad with rich verdure and flowers even to the water's edge. It was the land of the Lotophagi, or Lotos-eaters; so called because its people were passionately fond of the fruit of a certain plant which grew there in great abundance. In his beautiful poem called the "Lotos-Eaters," Mr. Tennyson thus describes the country:—

> "A land of streams! some, like a downward smoke,
> Slow-dropping veils of thinnest lawn, did go;
> And some through wavering lights and shadows broke,
> Rolling a slumbrous sheet of foam below.
> They saw the gleaming river seaward flow
> From the inner land; far off, three mountain-tops,
> Three silent pinnacles of aged snow,
> Stood sunset-flushed; and, dewed with showery drops,
> Up clomb the shadowy pine above the woven copse."

The people of this lovely land were mild and gentle in their manner. They welcomed the exploring party sent on shore by the voyagers, and gave them to eat of the lotos fruit. Now this fruit had the magical property that it caused those who partook of it to forget home, friends, everything save the pleasures of that enchanted land. When the men whom Ulysses had sent on shore had eaten their fill of the fruit, the taste of which was exceedingly delicious, they thought no more of their comrades, or of the wives and children waiting for them in distant Ithaca. They would have stayed with the Lotos-eaters all their lives; but Ulysses, when he understood what had befallen them, himself landed with another party, and dragged the unwilling warriors

to the ships; nor was it till some time had passed that the kind of intoxication caused by the magical fruit passed away, and those who had eaten of it returned to their right minds.

Pursuing their voyage, the hero and his comrades now came in sight of the country of the Cyclops, a race of enormous giants, each of whom had but one great eye in the middle of his forehead. They followed the occupation of shepherds, possessing herds of cattle and flocks of sheep, which, like themselves, were of gigantic proportions. Terrible stories were told of their ferocity and cruelty: they were said to defy the authority of the gods, and to feed on human flesh whenever any hapless mortals came within their reach. Ulysses, however, determined to penetrate their country, and find out for himself how far these stories were true. Opposite their coast lay a wooded islet, uninhabited by men, but tenanted by great numbers of wild goats. In a natural harbour of this isle, hidden from the mainland by high rocks, the chief caused his ships to cast anchor. There he led his men ashore, where they killed many goats, and thus procured materials for an abundant feast. At nightfall, leaving the others to continue their enjoyment, Ulysses with his own ship sailed over to the land of the Cyclops, and then selecting twelve of the bravest among the crew, he went ashore with them, taking also a goatskin filled with strong wine, and some provisions.

A little way from the shore, Ulysses and his companions discovered an immense cave, which was plainly the habitation of one of the giant race who peopled the country. They boldly entered, but found that the lord of this strange residence was absent. In its deep recesses were gathered great flocks of sheep

and goats, while rude shelves arranged along the sides were piled high with cheese and bowls of milk. Some of the companions of Ulysses urged that they should help themselves to whatever they could carry off, and return to their vessel before the giant came back. He, however, rejected this prudent counsel, being curious to see the monstrous inmate of the cave. He therefore directed a fire to be kindled, and having feasted abundantly on the fresh food they found in the cave, they awaited the giant's return.

Presently they heard without, footsteps so heavy as to shake the very ground; and then there entered a monster of such immense bulk and frightful aspect that the heart of Ulysses himself sank with fear, and he and his companions all shrunk into the recesses of the cave. More lofty in stature than the tallest tree, the giant was broad and rugged as a rock. His great limbs were covered with hair like the mane of a lion, his unkempt locks hung down about his shoulders, his cavernous mouth reached almost from ear to ear, and his single eye glared in the centre of his forehead with baleful ferocity. On his back he carried a huge pile of wood—great trees which he had torn up by the roots. These he cast on the floor of the cave with a noise like thunder; then seizing an immense rock, he closed with it the entrance to his habitation. Having milked his ewes and she-goats, he heaped wood on the fire, and the blaze ascending to the roof, revealed to him the Ithacans cowering in a corner.

"Who are ye?" he inquired in a voice that made them tremble, "and what has brought you hither?"

Mustering his courage, Ulysses made answer: "We are the

scanty remnant of that mighty Greek armament which but lately laid Troy in ashes. We have been driven to this coast by storms while on our homeward journey; and in our distress we implore thee to show us hospitality and give us relief. This we ask in the name of Zeus, who ever befriends the wanderer and the homeless."

"Fool that thou art!" sternly replied the giant, "to bid me regard the will of the ruler of Olympus. Know that we Cyclops regard him not, and hold ourselves his betters. But," he continued, suddenly assuming a gentler tone, "where is the ship that brought you hither? Is she anchored near the shore?"

Ulysses at once suspected that the monster meditated some evil purpose against the ship, and so cautiously answered that it had been wrecked, and that he and his companions were the sole survivors. Then he repeated his entreaty that he might be permitted to enjoy rest and refreshment.

Terrible was the answer he received. Disdaining further speech, the giant stretched forth his huge hand and seized two of the hero's companions. These he dashed furiously against the side of the cavern, so that their skulls were shattered to pieces. Then he tore them limb from limb, and devoured them while yet quivering with life. His horrid repast ended, he assuaged his thirst with great draughts of milk, and then stretched himself at full length on the ground before the fire and slept.

It may easily be imagined with what sensations of fear and wrath Ulysses and the others beheld the fate of their companions. When they saw that the giant was asleep, they at first drew their swords and thought of slaying him; but Ulysses remembered that

in that case they would be unable to remove the rock from the entrance, and so would be doomed to a lingering death within the cave. It was therefore determined that it would be better to wait the course of events.

In the morning Polyphemus—for that was the name of this cruel monster—rose from his hard couch, rekindled the fire, and attended to the wants of his flocks. That done, he seized two more of the unhappy Ithacans, and treated them as he had done their companions the night before. Having thus made his morning meal, he opened the entrance to the cavern, drove out the sheep and goats to their pasture, and then replaced the rock from the outside, so as still to keep Ulysses and the rest of his followers secure prisoners.

Thus left to themselves, the hero and his companions planned how they might be avenged on this devourer of human flesh, and how also they might contrive their own escape. At last a project occurred to Ulysses, which he forthwith proceeded to put into execution. In one corner of the cave stood Polyphemus' club, the stem of a tree, tall and ponderous as the mast of a ship. This the Ithacans took, and having reduced it in size, sharpened one end of it, and hardened the point in the fire. Then they hid the rude weapon thus formed, and waited for the giant's return.

In the evening he came as before, leading his flocks into the cavern. Having again secured the entrance, he seized, murdered, and devoured two more of Ulysses' companions. Now Ulysses stepped forward with the goatskin of wine, which had been brought from the ship, and addressing Polyphemus with the courage of despair, exclaimed:—

"O Cyclop, since thou hast made thy repast, wash it down with this liquor. From its flavour thou mayst know what rich treasures perished in our ship; and if thou wilt permit us to escape, we will bring thee more of the like. But if thou destroy us, mortals henceforward will shun this inhospitable coast, and

Ulysses giving Wine to Polyphemus.

thou wilt never again be able to enjoy this nectar, fit for the gods themselves."

The giant eagerly took the proffered goatskin, and drained its contents.

"Never before," he cried, "have I tasted aught so delicious! Who art thou that bestowest so noble a boon? Tell me thy name, that I may make thee a fitting reward."

"My name," answered the crafty Ulysses, "is No-man. Now, tell me what is the gift thou wilt bestow."

"It is this," answered Polyphemus with a drunken laugh, "that thou shalt be the last to perish. I will not devour thee until after all thy companions." He said no more, for the fumes of the strong liquor had already ascended to his brain; he lay down on the ground, and was speedily sunk in a deep sleep.

Then Ulysses and his comrades took the sharpened stem of the tree which they had prepared, thrust it again into the fire till it was red and glowing, and directed it with all their strength against the single eye of the monster. Deeply it pierced into the cavity, hissed in the eyeball, and at once destroyed his sight. With a roar of agony that shook the very rocks, Polyphemus sprang to his feet, the great tree-trunk still protruding from the place where a moment before his eye had been. He tore away the gory brand, dashed it to the ground, and groped wildly about the cave endeavouring to seize the Ithacans, who, of course, easily evaded his attempts. All the time he was bellowing so loudly in his agony that the other Cyclops heard his cries in their distant caves, and came crowding to the entrance of his abode.

"What hurts thee, Polyphemus?" inquired they. "Hath any of the race of mortals assailed thee in the hour of sleep, or are thieves among thy flocks?"

"Alas, my brethren!" answered the giant, "No-man hath cruelly assailed me."

Then became apparent Ulysses' cunning in choosing for himself so strange a name. The other Cyclops at once supposed that Polyphemus was suffering from the pangs of disease, and after

bidding him resign himself to the decrees of fate, and pray for relief to his father Neptune, they quitted the spot. Slow of brain as he was mighty in bulk, the giant could not understand why his brethren had not come to his aid. Still groaning and crying from the torture he was suffering, he continued to grope about the cave; and when he found his efforts to capture his enemies in that way were fruitless, he took away the rock that closed the entrance, and drove out the flocks, passing his huge hand over each sheep as it passed. But Ulysses at once devised a plan to outwit the monster. Taking the rams, which were of great size and strength, he bound them together by threes, and fastened one of his companions underneath the middle ram of each trio. One after another all the followers of the hero that were left alive got safely out of the cave in this way. He himself simply clung to the long under-fleece of the leading ram of the flock, which went forth last. As it passed the entrance Polyphemus restrained it, and piteously addressed it:—

"What makes thee the laggard of the flock, instead of being the leader as thou art wont? Is it because thou art conscious of the affliction that has befallen thy master that thou movest so slowly and sadly? Would that the gods could gift thee for a while with the power of speech; then wouldst thou tell me where the wretch No-man is concealed, that I might wreak vengeance upon him."

Then he released the ram, which bore Ulysses safely out of the cavern. Once outside, the chief speedily untied his companions, and they all hurried down to the shore, where they found their comrades anxiously awaiting them. Without delay they got

on board with a number of the sheep, and the oars were diligently plied till the ship was at some distance from the shore. Then Ulysses, standing on the deck, uplifted his voice and cried out :—

"Here me, O Cyclop! It was no coward, no ignoble slave whom thou didst doom to a shameful death in thy cave, but one whom Jove himself had appointed to punish thy breach of the law of hospitality towards the stranger."

Polyphemus heard, and rushing furiously from the cave, seized a huge rock, and hurled it in the direction whence the voice of his enemy had come. The immense mass was thrown with such prodigious force that it passed over the ship, and falling on the other side, raised great waves that washed the vessel back towards the shore. Again, by vigorous rowing, the sailors bore her away towards the open sea, and once more Ulysses spoke :—

"If any one, O Polyphemus, asks thee who it was that deprived thee of thy sight, answer that Ulysses did the deed—Ulysses, the son of Ithacan Laertes, and the conqueror of Troy."

"Alas!" answered Polyphemus, "long ages since it was predicted that I should suffer thus at Ulysses' hand; but I looked to see in him a hero of god-like size and strength, and not a wretched pigmy such as thou." Then he implored Neptune to avenge on Ulysses the suffering he endured :—

"If thine I am, nor thou my birth disown,
And if th' unhappy Cyclop be thy son,
Let not Ulysses breathe his native air,
Laertes' son, of Ithaca the fair.
If to review his country be his fate,
Be it through toils and sufferings long and late:

His lost companions let him first deplore;
Some vessel, not his own, transport him o'er;
And when at home from foreign sufferings freed,
More near and deep, domestic woes succeed."

Having uttered this prayer, to which Neptune listened and assented, the giant hurled against the vessel another great rock, which but just brushed past its stern. Without further delay, Ulysses now proceeded to rejoin the rest of his fleet, and the next morning the whole expedition set sail from the scene of such strange and terrible adventures.

CHAPTER II.

THE RULER OF THE WINDS—THE LÆSTRIGONES—THE ENCHANTRESS CIRCE.

AFTER some days of tossing on the wide sea, the voyagers came in sight of the floating island of Æolia. This wondrous isle, whose shores were everywhere surrounded by a lofty wall of brass, was the secure abode of Æolus, whom Jove had made the ruler of the winds. By his command over them he was able to move his floating kingdom in whatever direction he chose; and within, he and his family of six sons and six daughters led a life of perpetual enjoyment. Æolus received Ulysses and his companions with splendid hospitality, retained and feasted them for a month, and was never tired of listening to their stories of Trojan adventure. At last Ulysses became anxious to depart; and Æolus, by way of a parting gift, presented him with all the winds tied up in ox-skins, that they might not blow adversely on his voyage. Only Zephyrus, or the west wind, was left free, and wafted by his gentle breath the vessels made their way rapidly towards their destination. For ten days Ulysses, in his eagerness for home, remained at the helm of his ship, and already the shores of Ithaca were in sight, when

the hero, overpowered by fatigue, fell asleep. As soon as they perceived this to be the case, his companions began to wonder among themselves about the gift which Æolus had bestowed upon him, and which, they thought, must be a treasure of priceless value, because Ulysses set such great store upon it that he had caused the bags containing it to be secured to the mast-head of his vessel. The sailors exclaimed to one another that it was unfair that their leader should enjoy all those riches himself, and should not have distributed some of them among his faithful followers. They determined to open the bags, and at least find out what they contained. This unhappy design they forthwith carried into execution; the thongs which bound the mouths of the bags were cut asunder. In an instant the winds, rejoicing at their freedom, but enraged by their tedious confinement, rushed forth, and a terrible storm ensued, which in a few hours bore back the ships the whole distance they had traversed in the preceding ten days. Ulysses woke from his slumber to find himself as far distant from his beloved Ithaca as he had been when he set sail from the island-kingdom of Æolus.

The vessels had in fact been borne back to the island, and Ulysses, with two or three of his comrades, again sought the presence of the king. They found Æolus, as usual, feasting with his sons. Great was his surprise to see the hero again; but when Ulysses had recounted the misfortune that had befallen him, the king sternly bade him begone, declaring that he would lend no further aid to a man who was plainly pursued by the enmity of the gods.

Sorrowfully did the voyagers again put out to sea, the sailors

now bitterly lamenting the folly they had committed. But all lamentation was vain: they could do nothing more than commit themselves to the mercy of the waters. For six days and nights the ships ploughed their way through the foaming sea. Then they came in sight of a land where there were rich pastures and cities crowned with stately towers. It was, though they knew it not, the country of the Læstrigones, a race of gigantic cannibals, not greatly inferior in size to the Cyclops, and more formidable, because endowed with greater cunning. Seeing a natural harbour on the coast, the wanderers anchored their vessels within it, and then sent three men to explore the land. As they walked they beheld a tall but beautiful maiden filling a water-vessel at a spring. Approaching her, they inquired what was the name of the country and who was its ruler. With treacherous courtesy the damsel begged them to follow her, and receive the hospitality to which all strangers were entitled. She led them to an immense palace; but as soon as they entered they were appalled by seeing a ferocious giant—none other than Antiphates, the king of the country—who at once rushed open-mouthed upon them. The three men fled for their lives: one was overtaken and instantly devoured by Antiphates, but the others reached the vessels. Before, however, the breathless fugitives had time to tell their terrible story, a great crowd of savage giants poured down to the coast to seize the prey. With huge masses of rock they battered and crushed the ships, and then, plunging into the sea, grasped and devoured their wretched crews. Ulysses alone, by promptly cutting with his sword the cable that held his vessel to her anchor, succeeded in escaping; and of the twelve ships that had

entered the harbour a few hours before, his only bore out again to sea.

The hero and his few remaining comrades were so overwhelmed by this terrible calamity that they could scarce feel grateful for their own escape. In sorrowful silence they plied their oars and spread their sails, thinking only of flight from the

The King of the Læstrigones seizing one of Ulysses' Followers.

blood-stained shore where so many of their companions had met with an untimely end. Chance, or the will of the gods, now led them to the coasts of the island of Æaea, the abode of Circe. This was a mighty enchantress, a daughter of the god of light and of an ocean-goddess named Persa. For two days the vessel remained

at anchor without any of those on board daring to land, lest fresh misfortunes should befall them. At the end of that time, however, their provisions were exhausted; so Ulysses, arming himself with sword and spear, ventured ashore. Ascending a high point, he saw the roof of a stately palace arising from the midst of a thick grove, and determined to proceed thither. First, however, he returned to the ship to inform the crew of his purpose, and on his way back succeeded in surprising and slaying a tall stag, which gave welcome food and renewed courage to the voyagers. Having feasted, and enjoyed a night's repose, Ulysses and the rest assembled in council. The hero related what he had seen the previous evening, and then caused the party to be divided into two: of one he himself retained the command, while he appointed his kinsman Eurylochus to lead the other. Lots were cast to determine which party should explore the island and which remain behind to guard the ship. Fortune assigned the task of exploration to Eurylochus, who accordingly set out, in no cheerful mood, with about twenty companions.

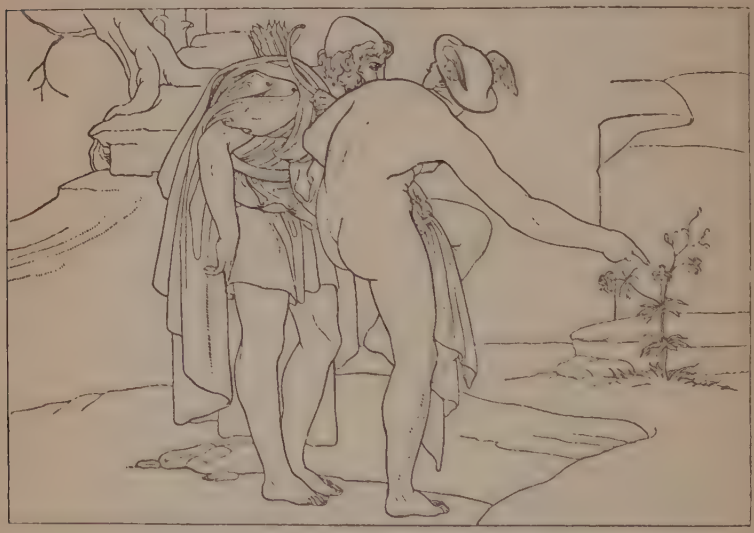
They marched in the direction of the thick grove which Ulysses had seen, and penetrating its shady recesses, discovered a vast palace of gleaming marble, and of exquisite architecture. As they strode through the wood, numbers of immense wolves and lions advanced toward them, but instead of showing the usual ferocity of their kind, wagged their tails, fawned on the strangers, licked their feet, and made every sign of giving them welcome. Encouraged by this wonderful spectacle, Eurylochus and his companions approached the stately portals of the palace, and they heard within a voice of more than mortal power and

sweetness, chanting old songs, such as had been dear to them at their own hearths long years before. It was none other than Circe herself, who, as she sat at her loom weaving a fabric of surpassing splendour, sang thus to lure within her gates any mortals who might land upon her isle, so that she might exercise her magic arts upon them.

Yielding at once to the charm, all the Ithacans, with the exception of their leader, advanced to the gates of the palace, which swung wide open to admit them. The goddess rose as they entered, and bade them welcome; and her marvellous beauty completed their inthralment. Summoning her maidens, Circe caused an abundant feast to be spread. Seated at the table, on luxurious couches, the toil-worn wanderers, in the enjoyment of the rich food and rare wines before them, forgot even to admire the splendours of the lofty hall, with its walls and floor of varicoloured marbles. They ate and drank till they were weary, and thought no food had ever seemed so delicious before. But powerful drugs had been intermixed with all of which they partook, and of these they were soon destined to feel the effect. Suddenly rising from her seat, the enchantress waved a wand, muttering some mysterious words, and lo! instead of the noisy mariners who an instant before had been lolling around the board, there were a herd of gaunt and bristly swine. But even in their transformation the wretches retained their human minds, and their anguish and terror at the change which had come over them were expressed in loud grunting and screaming, as they scrambled about the stately apartment. Some of Circe's attendants now drove them with cruel blows to sties which stood ready for their

reception, and spread before them acorns and mast, and other food such as hogs delight in.

Meanwhile, Eurylochus, who had been too prudent to enter the palace, waited long for his comrades' return; and as they came not, he returned at last, full of alarm, to the ship, where he told his story to Ulysses. The latter at once assumed his arms, and



Mercury pointing out to Ulysses the magic Herb.

set forth to ascertain the fate of his followers, disregarding the entreaties of Eurylochus that he should not encounter the hidden perils of the palace, but should leave the men who had so mysteriously disappeared to their fate. As he approached the grove, he met a youth of immortal grace and beauty. This was none

other than the god Mercury, who informed him of the calamity that had overtaken his friends, and informed him that if by his own unaided powers he attempted to release them, he would only share their doom. "But," added he, presenting the hero with a small plant, "this herb will protect thee against all the arts of the enchantress. Possessing it, thou mayest in safety partake of the feast she will set before thee; then, when she seeks to exercise her charms upon thee, draw thy sword and make her swear, in dread of death, to restore thy comrades to their human form, and to abstain from all spells against thee and them while ye remain her guests."

Having thus spoken, and placed the magic herb — a plant with a black root and milk-white flower, called moly—in Ulysses' hand, Mercury disappeared. The hero advanced confidently to the palace, the gates of which swung open to receive him as they had done before to his comrades. Circe viewed with delight the entrance of this stranger, lofty and majestic in aspect, in whom she only perceived another victim to her arts. She conducted him to the table, and herself waited upon him and plied him with the poisoned meats and wine. He, confident in the possession of the magic herb, partook freely till his appetite was satisfied. Then drawing forth her wand, Circe waved it over his head, and would have changed him into a lion. But how great was her surprise when her guest remained untransformed. Now in his turn he drew his flashing sword, and with threatening looks approached her. Circe was struck with fear. She sank at his feet imploring mercy.

"Thou must surely," she exclaimed, "be none other than

Ulysses, of whom Mercury foretold to me that he would defy my magic. Sheathe thy sword, I implore thee, and let us change hatred for love."

But sternly Ulysses answered that there could be no love between them while his companions remained the victims of her arts, and while he himself had no surety that he should not become like them. He obliged her to swear, by the sacred oath

Ulysses at the Table of Circe.

which no deity dared to break, that she would weave no enchantment against him; and not till then did he consent to return his sword to the scabbard or clasp her hand in amity. The fair sorceress was now as anxious to please him as she had been before to destroy him. At his request she caused the herd of swine to be led into the chamber from their sties. When they beheld Ulysses there, they clustered and thronged about him

with uncouth sounds of sorrow and affection; but Circe, waving her wand over them, transformed them once more to their original form; and the joy and gratitude they then displayed were so affecting that the enchantress herself was moved to tears by the spectacle.

At Circe's bidding, Ulysses now returned to his ship, where

Circe restoring the Followers of Ulysses to their natural Form.

the remainder of his followers were waiting in deep dejection. He caused the vessel to be dragged on to the beach, and its cargo to be stored in some neighbouring caverns, and then led his companions to the palace. Thus the whole of the ship's crew were assembled in the house of Circe, who for a year entertained them with boundless hospitality.

CHAPTER III.

THE VISIT TO HADES—THE SIRENS—SCYLLA AND CHARYBDIS—THE CATTLE OF APOLLO.

BUT after twelve months had been passed thus pleasantly, some of Ulysses' warriors, wearying of the inaction and luxury which had at first seemed so delightful, remembered their homes and families, and they came to their chief, imploring him once more to set sail. Ulysses had so much enjoyed his sojourn with Circe, that it was not without sorrow that he came to demand of the fair sorceress permission to leave her. Reluctantly she gave it; but she also warned him that he was not yet destined to reach Ithaca. He must first visit the regions of the dead, to learn his future destiny from the shade of the Theban poet Tiresias, to whom had been granted the power of foretelling the future even after his death. Bold as he was, Ulysses did not relish the thought of this expedition; but as Circe assured him that it was the will of the gods he should undertake it, and gave him full instructions as to the course he should take, he prepared to set out. The enchantress had stored his ship with provisions, and he and his companions now descended to the shore and embarked—all save one, a sluggish youth named

Elpenor, who had been sleeping on the roof of the palace, and being suddenly roused from sleep by the summons to go on board, stepped in his confusion off the roof, and was killed in his fall to the ground.

Fanned by favouring breezes, sent by Circe, the ship ran on to the furthest limits of ocean, where it was bound by the shores of the Cimmerian land—a miserable and gloomy country, the fitting entrance to the realm of Pluto, for there the sun never shone. Landing, unaccompanied by any of his companions, and taking with him only a black ram for sacrifice, Ulysses sought the spot described to him by the sorceress, where the furious waters of the river Phlegethon, and the dark and sullen stream of Cocytus, descended together into a deep gulf, which was their entrance into the infernal regions. At this gloomy place the hero dug in the black earth a deep trench, and poured into it wine, milk, honey, and lastly the blood of the ram; and then with solemn rites he invoked the presence of the shade of Tiresias. Innumerable spectres crowded round the trench, wan and ghastly, eager to lap the offering; but Circe had warned him that he must permit only Tiresias to approach, so that in spite of their lamentable cries he drove off all the rest with his sword, till the seer should have appeared and satisfied himself.

Among the shades that drew near, Ulysses recognized that of his comrade Elpenor, who had so lately perished in Æaea. This spectre piteously besought him, on his return to Circe's island, to give decent burial to his corpse—a task which Ulysses promised to perform. Next, the hero was stricken with grief to behold the form of his venerable mother, Anticlea, whom

he had left hale and happy when he set out for Troy, and of whose death he was now for the first time informed. But though tears of sorrow fell down his cheeks like rain, he kept even this dear spectre aloof from the sacrifice. But the stately ghost of Tiresias now approached, and having eagerly partaken of the strange food Ulysses had provided, warned him in half-mystic language

Ulysses and Tiresias.

of dangers and trials to come, but of an eventual safe return. The hero listened attentively, and then asked why the spectre of Anticlea stood unmoved in his presence. Tiresias answered that only those spirits which were permitted to taste the beverage Ulysses had brought could recall the circumstances of their past lives.

He then departed, and the chief now permitted his mother's shade to partake of the sacrifice. Immediately that she had done so, she recognized her son, eagerly asked him the reason of his entrance into that gloomy kingdom of death, and in reply to his own questions, told him that his father still lived to mourn his absence, that his wife remained true to him and longed for his return, and that his son Telemachus was advancing to manhood. She herself, she said, had died through grief at Ulysses' long absence. Her son now strove to embrace her, but his arms passed through the shadowy form, nor encountered any solid substance, and while he wept in sorrow she disappeared from his longing gaze. Innumerable other spectres succeeded:—Leda, the mother of Helen; Antiope, who bore to Zeus Amphion, the founder of the great city of Thebes; Alcmena, the mother of that noblest of all the heroes, Hercules; and many more queens and women famed in ancient story. When these had passed, the shade of Agamemnon presented itself—to the horror of Ulysses, who knew not of the monarch's untimely death. After drinking of the sacrifice, Atrides at once recognized Ulysses, and related the lamentable story of his own murder. Afterwards, the Ithacan chief beheld and conversed with the ghost of Achilles; he saw also that of Ajax, but the spectre, cherishing still the mortification which, when Achilles' arms had been awarded to Ulysses, had driven him to madness and death, stood sullenly apart, and would not answer when his successful rival addressed him, but turned haughtily away. Ulysses daringly advanced in pursuit of him, but was arrested ere he had gone many steps by the appalling spectacles which met his gaze. On a lofty throne sat King Minos,

the judge of the dead, surrounded by a crowd of trembling spirits, some of whom he consigned to eternal tortures, while others were admitted to the Elysian fields of endless happiness. Near by lay Tityus, a giant so huge that as he was extended on the ground his form covered nine acres. He had dared to offer an insult to the goddess Latona, the mother of Apollo and Diana; and those proud deities slew him with their arrows. While in Hades he was punished by being kept in chains while two vultures for ever fed on his liver, which grew again as fast as it was devoured. A little further off Tantalus was enduring the penalty awarded to him for betraying the secrets of the gods. Immersed up to the neck in water, he was tormented with raging thirst: but whenever he bent his head to drink, the flood disappeared; while over his head hung rich and juicy fruits, which always rose above his reach whenever he stretched out his arm to them. Thus he was perpetually disappointed; and from his name there has come into our language the word "tantalise," which is used to describe the process of tormenting a person with prospects of good that cannot be realized.

Turning, Ulysses beheld Sisyphus, who, for his cruelty and avarice as King of Corinth, had been condemned after death to the punishment of perpetually rolling to the top of a hill a huge stone, which, as soon as he had forced it to the top, descended again. The mighty shade of Hercules, towering above all the rest, next approached, and accosted Ulysses, who was tempted to explore still further the terrors of the lower world, but was overcome by fear when he beheld a swarm of gruesome spectres ascend with frantic yells from the deepest gulfs of Hades. Taking to flight,

he reached the shore in safety, joined his comrades on board the ship, and speedily quitted the regions of gloom for the pure atmosphere of light and human life.

Their vessel now bore the wanderers back to Circe's isle, where Ulysses' first care was to redeem his promise to the shade of Elpenor by burning his body with the accustomed ceremonies, and erecting a tomb over his ashes. That night the enchantress

Ulysses terrified by the Spectres.

again feasted Ulysses and his companions, and afterwards he told her the story of his adventures in Hades. She in turn described to him some of the dangers he was destined yet to encounter, and told him how best they might be avoided.

The next day the hero and his friends bade farewell to Circe, and set out once more on their long journey. In a while they came in sight of a low-lying shore which Ulysses, forewarned by

the sorceress, knew to be the island of the Sirens. These were three sea-nymphs who had such a marvellous power of song that no mortal who heard them could resist the temptation of seeking them on their island-abode, where he speedily perished. Ulysses, however, was determined to hear their song; and in order to do so in safety, he first stuffed the ears of all his comrades with wax,

The Sirens.

and then caused them to bind him securely to the mast, having previously directed them to row on past the island in spite of any signs or gestures he might make. When the Sirens saw the vessel approaching, they uplifted their voices in a song of such rapturous sweetness that the hero struggled desperately to escape

from his bonds and go to them, and shouted out furious commands to his sailors to steer toward the land. All was in vain; in vain the lovely but dangerous maidens chanted their most delightful strains. Impelled by the vigorous arms of the oarsmen, the ship swiftly swept past the fatal island, and it was not till the voices of the Sirens had died away in the distance that Ulysses was released.

And now the weary travellers were confronted by a new peril. Their vessel was approaching a narrow strait, on each side of which rose a lofty and rugged rock, while the waters between raged furiously. At the base of one of these rocks there gaped a cavern, in which perpetually sat a terrible monster named Scylla. She had twelve great arms, and six horrible heads, each with a long neck. It was her wont to seize with each of her cruel mouths a victim from any passing ship that approached sufficiently near to her den; and the misfortune was that mariners were compelled to pass close by it, for on the other side of the narrow strait there was a yet more fearful danger—a whirlpool named Charybdis, which instantly swallowed up any ship that was drawn into its current.

Ulysses' sailors were appalled at the sight of the strait, with its tempestuous waves; of its greater dangers they knew nothing. The hero himself was aware of them, having been instructed by Circe; but he encouraged his companions by word and act, and himself took the helm to guide the ship into the fearful passage. Obeying the warning of the sorceress, he kept as far as he could from the whirlpool of Charybdis, and hoped at the same time to elude the monster Scylla. But his hopes were not fulfilled. As

the vessel shot past, the ghastly monster emerged from her cave with hideous roars, and bore off six hapless victims from the deck. As they were whirled into the air in the cruel grasp of the monster, they stretched their arms to Ulysses with imploring cries; but he could do nothing to aid them, and the next moment they were crushed to pieces by the terrible teeth, and consigned to Scylla's insatiable maw.

Scylla seizing some of Ulysses' Companions.

At the cost of this painful sacrifice, Ulysses' vessel passed through the strait, emerging immediately afterwards in a bright and sunny sea, in which rose the verdure-clad shores and wood-crowned hills of the island of Trinacria. In full view of the toil-worn mariners was a lovely plain in which fed great herds of cattle and flocks of sheep of uncommon size and beauty. The sounds of the lowing and bleating were inexpressibly sweet to

Ulysses' companions, who already in imagination feasted on the succulent flesh, and waited impatiently for their leader to give the order for the vessel to steer to the shore. But very different were the feelings of Ulysses himself: he knew that here was a peril as great as any which had yet threatened him. These flocks and herds were the property of Apollo, and were regarded by him with peculiar tenderness. They were kept by two sister-nymphs, Lampetia and Phaethusa, daughters of the god of light; and both Tiresias and Circe had warned Ulysses that if he or his men slew any of the animals, they would be visited by the relentless wrath of Apollo. The hero therefore proposed to his comrades that they should not land, telling them that the enchantress had warned him against doing so. But the crew received his proposal with sullen murmurs, and Eurylochus openly declared that they could not continue the voyage without some rest. His words were received by the others with shouts of approval, and Ulysses was obliged to yield; but he called upon every man to swear that they would leave the sheep and cattle unmolested.

The ship was brought to anchor accordingly, and the wanderers joyfully rushed ashore. Ulysses had hoped to set sail again and quit the dangerous spot on the following morning; but the weather became so violent that this was impossible. For a whole month one storm followed another, and at the end of that time the provisions with which Circe had stored the vessel were exhausted, and the unfortunate Ithacans were reduced to feed on such fish and small game as they could capture. Only the stern prohibition of their leader prevented them from breaking the oath they had taken to leave the flocks and herds that grazed about them

unmolested. But one unlucky evening Ulysses, wandering about the country in search of food, lay down in a grove, overcome by fatigue, and fell asleep. Eurylochus took advantage of his absence to urge his companions to slay some of the cattle.

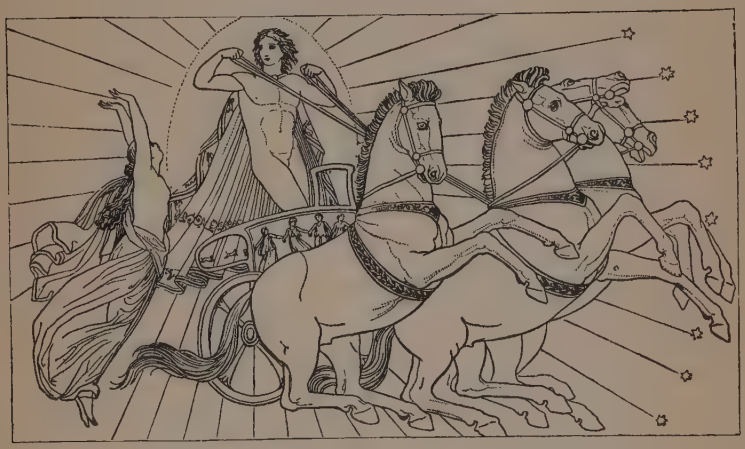
"Why," he cried, "should we pine to death from hunger when food in plenty is within our reach? Let us take it and feast. If after all we return home in safety, we will offer expiatory sacrifices to Apollo; but if he visit us with his wrath, he cannot devise any punishment more painful than death by starvation."

The rest of the sailors approved of his advice. Several of the cattle were seized and slaughtered, and when Ulysses awoke from his slumbers, and, with uneasy mind, hastened to the shore, he found his men feasting on the rich flesh. In vain he reproached them. They paid no attention to his words, but continued to revel in their guilty abundance.

Meantime the nymph Lampetia hastened to Olympus, and complained to her sire of the outrage that had been committed. Full of wrath, Apollo impetuously demanded of Zeus that his wrong should be avenged, and swore that unless his petition were complied with, the sun should no longer shine upon the earth. Zeus promised that he should have ample satisfaction. Signs of the wrath of the gods soon appeared. The skins of the slaughtered cattle crept along the ground as though they were endued with life. Their limbs bellowed and lowed even while roasting on the spits. But the reckless sailors paid no heed, and for six days continued their impious feasting; in which, however, Ulysses refused to share.

On the seventh day the sea was once more calm, and the

voyagers hastened to embark and set sail. No sooner were they out of sight of land than an appalling tempest arose. The sky was covered with black clouds, the waves rolled mountain-high under the lash of a tremendous wind, the thunder pealed incessantly, and red lightnings flashed over the devoted ship. At last Jove hurled against the vessel one of his irresistible bolts, which shivered it to pieces, and dashed the unhappy crew into



Lampetia complaining to Apollo of the Destruction of his Cattle.

the raging sea. All perished save Ulysses, who lashed himself to the mast, and after having been drifted about for nine days and nights, was cast ashore on the island of Ogygia.

This island was the abode of a goddess named Calypso, a daughter of Oceanus, or, according to some traditions, of the giant Atlas. She was endowed with great beauty, and dwelt in a charming grotto, amply stored with all the appliances of com-

fort and luxury. Finding Ulysses half-dead on the sands, she conducted him to her grotto, and tended him with the greatest care till he had recovered his health. The manly grace and beauty of the hero inspired Calypso with an ardent love for him. She strove to excite a similar passion in his breast, and so far succeeded that for seven years he remained contentedly in her isle, forgetful of Ithaca and his once-cherished wife and son. But Minerva, who had never lost sight of her favourite hero, was determined to bring about his safe return to his home; and when the seven years had passed, she began to take measures to accomplish this event.

CHAPTER IV.

PENELOPE, TELEMACHUS, AND THE SUITORS.

IN the council of the gods, Minerva complained of Ulysses' long and unmerited exile from his home. Zeus answered that it was owing to the wrath of Neptune, who desired to avenge the injury sustained by his son, the giant Polyphemus, whom the Ithacan chief had blinded. He added, however, that the ruler of ocean must content himself with the sufferings he had already inflicted, and oppose no further obstacles to Ulysses' safe return. Having obtained this decision, Pallas proposed that Mercury should be sent down to Ogygia, to command Calypso, in the name of Jove, to release the hero whom she had so long held in the toils of love; while she herself undertook to visit Ithaca, and instruct the young Telemachus how to act amid the grave troubles that surrounded him. Accordingly she descended with a falcon's swiftness from Olympus to Ithaca; and, assuming the guise of Mentes, king of the Taphian Islands, an old ally of Ulysses, took her way to the royal palace.

There all was, and long had been, a scene of lamentable waste and confusion. The beauty and virtue of Penelope, the wife of Ulysses, were famed all over Greece; and when years had passed

after the destruction of Troy, and all the other leaders had returned to their homes, gone to found other states, or were known to have perished, while Ulysses still remained absent and nothing was heard of him, the nobles and great warriors from all the surrounding countries came to Ithaca as suitors for the hand of the queen. She herself was a prize that any hero might be

Minerva complaining of Ulysses' Exile.

proud to win; and besides, the wooer whom she might choose for her husband might reasonably hope to fill the Ithacan throne, which the venerable Laertes was now too old and feeble to occupy, while Telemachus, on the other hand, was too young to undertake so important a charge. Thus the number of those who

came to Ithaca to press their suit for Penelope was very great. She refused for a long time to listen to their proposals at all, because she continued to hope that Ulysses would return; and when his protracted absence gave them a pretext for disregarding this plea, she, still true to her lord, and trustful that he would yet one day be restored to her, devised an excuse which for some time kept off the troublesome wooers. She demanded leave,

Minerva descending to Ithaca.

before making her choice of a second husband, to finish the weaving of a mourning garment which she was making for her father-in-law, Laertes. To such a request no reasonable objection could be offered; but strange to say, though the suitors themselves saw that Penelope worked assiduously at the fabric every day, it never during three years made the smallest progress. This was a

mystery which the suitors were quite unable to understand, till at last one of the queen's handmaidens betrayed her, and concealed some of the suitors at night in the apartment where the work was carried on. Thus hidden, they saw Penelope descend at the midnight hour, when the household was buried in repose, and unravel all the work she had accomplished during the day.

Penelope surprised by the Suitors.

They burst forth from their hiding-place and reproached her for the artifice she had employed. This she was now obliged to abandon; but still she firmly refused to make choice of a husband.

On their part the suitors persisted in remaining at the palace

till one of them should be chosen by Penelope. Month after month and year after year they spent in riotous feasting, wasting the wealth of Ulysses, and making the court a scene of shameful revels. There was none who could keep them in check. Laertes was too frail, Telemachus too young, while all the chief warriors had accompanied Ulysses to Troy, whence, alas! none were destined to return. But now, at the time of Minerva's visit, Telemachus was no longer a boy. He had attained his twentieth year, and was gifted with his father's manly graces, his father's courage, and a large share of his father's wisdom. He had long been impatient of the insolence and oppression of the suitors, and they were beginning to perceive that this young prince was a dangerous obstacle in the way of their designs.

When the goddess of wisdom arrived at the royal mansion, she saw sufficient proofs of the evils which the absence of Ulysses and the presence of the unwelcome band of wooers were causing to Ithaca. Before the wide gate the suitors were lolling on couches, playing at chess and other games, while a number of female slaves were kept constantly occupied in filling up their goblets with wine. Within, a rich feast was being prepared, as it was daily, for these self-invited guests. Telemachus sat alone, sad and silent; but when Minerva, in the form of Mentes, paused at the gate, and none came forward to perform the rites of hospitality, the prince hastily advanced to repair the negligence of the house-servants, and courteously invited the stranger within. He conducted him to a table apart from that at which the feast was arranged for the suitors, who now tumultuously entered the hall to begin their daily revel. While they feasted and drank, and danced

to the music which a celebrated harpist and singer named Phemius produced from his lyre, Telemachus attended to the wants of the newly-arrived guest, and poured out bitter complaints of the insolence and extravagance of the men who were thus consuming his father's wealth. The pretended Mentes, in reply to his respectful questions, proclaimed his name and rank, and said that he was an early friend of Ulysses. When Telemachus expressed fears that his father must have perished, the disguised goddess confidently predicted that he would one day return and exact retribution from the crew of suitors who now trespassed on the hospitality of his palace. She then proceeded to advise the young prince forthwith to sail in search of Ulysses, bidding him go first to Pylos, and afterwards to Sparta, where Menelaus, who had not long returned after his long wanderings, might be able to give him some useful information. Then all at once, assuming her own majestic form, Minerva disappeared from sight; and Telemachus, at once perceiving that it was a deity who had been his guest, resolved faithfully to obey her commands.

Meanwhile, weary of dancing, the suitors had called on Phemius to sing, and the bard had chosen for his theme the woes that had befallen the Hellenic chiefs on their return from Troy. His clear and tuneful voice reached the ears of Penelope, whose heart was wrung by his words when she reflected on the long absence of her lord, and the miseries that he might possibly be enduring. She therefore descended to the hall, and commanded Phemius to choose some other theme. But Telemachus excused him, and so eloquently urged the queen to let him continue his

song that she assented, full of admiration of her son's grace and wisdom of speech. She then again withdrew; but her appearance had caused the suitors to break out in angry quarrelling, each boasting of his own superior claim to her hand. Enraged by the freedom with which these rude lords bandied about his mother's name, Telemachus bade them cease their disputes, and

Phemius singing to the Suitors.

requested them to attend at a council the following morning, when he should have an important announcement to make.

At the appointed hour the council assembled, and then Telemachus addressed them. He complained that the suitors were taking advantage of his youth to waste his father's substance on their pleasures. He appealed to those Ithacan lords who were Ulysses' true friends to aid him in putting an end to the shameful scenes of

which the palace was every day the theatre; and predicted that if, in obedience to his demands, the unwelcome guests did not forthwith depart and leave the queen and himself in peace, the day was fast approaching when they would pay with their lives for the wrong they had committed.

Antinous, the proudest and fiercest of the suitors, haughtily replied, that till Penelope had made her choice of one of them for a husband, neither he nor any of his companions would quit the palace or alter their present mode of life. He therefore bade the prince, if he wished to be freed from them, to compel his mother to select the man to whom she would give her hand.

Telemachus indignantly refused. How, he asked, could he force his mother to take a second lord, while she believed the first to be still living? He repeated the warning he had already given:—

> "Haste from the court, ye spoilers, haste away:
> Waste in wild riot what your land allows,
> There ply the early feast, and there carouse.
> But if, to honour lost, 'tis still decreed
> For you my bowl shall flow, my flocks shall bleed,
> Judge, and assert my right, impartial Jove!
> By him, and all th' immortal host above
> (O sacred oath), if Heaven the power supply,
> Vengeance I vow, and for your wrongs ye die."

But the suitors received his threats with derision; whereupon he announced his purpose of taking ship immediately to seek for his father. To this the lords readily assented; and Telemachus, under the guidance of Minerva, who now again descended to pro-

tect him, and took the form of an old Ithacan lord named Mentor, stocked a ship with the necessary provisions, and embarked. A short and uneventful voyage brought them to the coast of Pylos, where they landed, and were received with a cordial welcome by the venerable king, who was in the act of offering sacrifices to the gods on the beach. Having partaken of his hospitality, Telem-

Telemachus setting out in Search of his Father.

achus, in reply to his questions, announced the object of his journey, and entreated Nestor, if he knew anything of Ulysses' fate, to reveal it.

The aged king, when he learned that it was the son of his old companion in arms that stood before him, tenderly embraced him. He related all that he knew of Ulysses' doings after the fall of Troy; but that was only little, for it will be remembered that Nestor was one of the leaders who refused to stay behind with

Agamemnon to offer the propitiatory sacrifices, while Ulysses had done so. However, Nestor advised Telemachus to visit Menelaus at Sparta; and having entertained him that night in his palace, gave him a chariot to make the journey to Sparta by land, and sent his son Pisistratus to accompany him.

In due course the youths safely arrived in the city where Menelaus reigned, and were received by the king with splendid

Nestor's Sacrifice.

hospitality. The riches which adorned his palace, and which included many of the finest spoils of Troy, filled Telemachus with wonder and admiration. The ceilings of the apartments were inlaid with ivory, and the walls with amber and precious stones. The bath, to which the guests were conducted to refresh themselves after their journey, was of variegated marble; and the

vessels in which were served the food and wine, of which they were invited to partake in company with the king, were of solid gold and silver. But when the son of Ulysses expressed his admiration, Menelaus declared that all these treasures had been dearly bought by his ten years of warfare, and the eight years of wandering that had followed. Gladly, he said, would he relinquish them all, if by that means he could buy back the lives of the brave warriors who had fallen in his cause. Most of all, he regretted the hard lot of Ulysses, who had been doomed so long to wander far from his home, and whose fate was even now unknown. When Telemachus, who had not yet revealed his name, heard his father thus tenderly spoken of, he could not refrain from tears; which Menelaus observed, and at once guessed who the youth was.

Just then Helen—still as fair and as bright as when Paris first bore her off a half-reluctant captive—entered the hall, and seeing the two young strangers, asked her lord who they were, at the same time remarking how much one of them resembled Ulysses. Menelaus agreed with her, and then Pisistratus confessed that it was indeed Telemachus who was before them, and explained the errand on which they had come. Menelaus and his queen both welcomed the son of Ulysses with affection, and related to the young prince some of his father's exploits in the war. Then Menelaus recounted the history of his own adventures on his homeward voyage, and especially his meeting with the god Proteus, who, he said, had revealed to him that Ulysses was detained by the nymph Calypso in her isle. On learning this, Telemachus was at once impatient to return to his ship at Pylos; and

though Menelaus would fain have entertained him long in his hospitable court, he would only consent to remain for a single day.

Meanwhile at Ithaca the suitors were made very uneasy by Telemachus' journey. They feared that he had not gone abroad to seek his father so much as to obtain the aid of foreign princes in order to expel them from his palace. They therefore deter-

Penelope's Dream.

mined to destroy him on his homeward journey. Antinous prepared a ship, and choosing twenty of the bravest among his associates, set sail, intending to lie in wait for the ship of Telemachus, attack it, and put to death everybody he found on board. The herald Medon, who was one of the suitors, but who in his heart inclined to the side of Telemachus and the queen, hastened to

Penelope with the tidings of this shameful plot. She, overcome with grief at the prospect of new calamities, invoked the intercession of Minerva; and the goddess, pitying her anguish, sent in the night a vision to console her. Assuming the form of her sister Iphthima, the vision assured her, in the name of the immortals, that Telemachus would safely accomplish his return; and so hope and happiness revived in the bosom of the queen.

CHAPTER V.

ULYSSES' DEPARTURE FROM CALYPSO'S ISLE—THE PHÆACIANS—THE RETURN TO ITHACA.

BUT it is now time to return again to Ulysses. Notwithstanding the luxury he enjoyed on the island of Calypso, and the love with which her beauty and kindness had inspired him, the remembrance of his native Ithaca, of the faithful wife who there languished for him, of his venerable father and the son with whom he had so reluctantly parted twenty years before—all these recollections had of late come frequently into his mind. He grew melancholy, no longer found pleasure in Calypso's society, and often sat for hours on the shore gazing on the ever-restless sea, and longing for the power to cross it. Yet, though his bonds were of the softest, he was a secure prisoner. There was no boat or ship in the island, nor had he ever seen the tools for making one. Besides, he well knew that Calypso's passion for him was extreme, and that she would never, of her own free will, consent to his departure.

But Minerva had not forgotten her favourite hero. Moved by her entreaties, Zeus now sent down Mercury to the island with a strict command to Calypso that she should enable Ulysses to quit

it. Obeying the command, the god of swiftness arrived at the grotto where the nymph dwelt—a lovely spot, in front of which green trees ever waved their graceful branches, while the entrance to the cavern was festooned with creeping vines, the rich fruit hanging in heavy clusters and peeping amid the leaves; past the entrance flowed a pellucid rill, that descended the hill-side in murmuring cascades, and kept the sward perpetually green and

Mercury delivering his Message to Calypso.

fresh. So beautiful was the scene, that Mercury, accustomed though he was to the splendours of Olympus, paused to look round and admire. Then he entered the grotto, where Calypso, being herself a deity, at once knew him, and gave him a cordial welcome. But when she heard the message he had been charged to deliver, her smiles were exchanged for anger and tears. Bitterly did she complain of being deprived of the man she loved; and she reminded

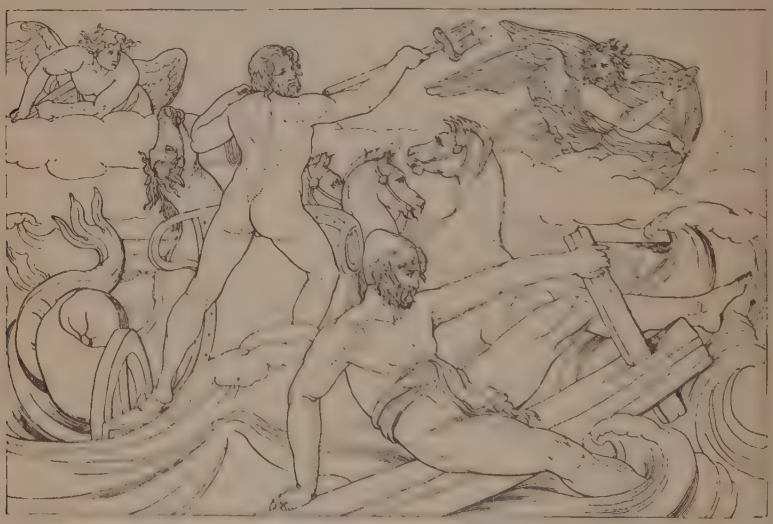
Mercury how Jupiter had in like manner deprived Ceres of her lover Iasion by striking him dead in her arms. But she knew that the command of Jove must be obeyed. When Mercury had departed, therefore, she sought Ulysses; and finding him sorrowing on the shore, announced that he was free to depart, and that she would instruct him how to form a raft that would enable him to cross the sea in safety.

Jupiter slaying the Lover of Ceres.

Ulysses at first refused to believe that the nymph was speaking in good faith; but she swore by the sacred oath, which even the gods dare not break, that her purpose was sincere, and after vainly trying to tempt him to a voluntary stay by the offer of immortality if he would consent to spend it with her, she fulfilled her

promise. She conducted the willing hero to a grove of lofty trees, furnished him with an axe and other implements, and assisted him to construct a large and strong raft. With her own fair hands she wove the sails and twisted the cordage, and, when the work was done, supplied the vessel with stores of food and wine. Then having taken a tender farewell of the goddess, Ulysses once more resumed the journey, which for seven long years he had abandoned. Steadily for seventeen days did he plough his way by the aid of gentle and favouring winds through the great deep; but at the end of that time it happened that Neptune, returning from a visit he had paid to Aurora in the far-off land of Ethiopia, caught sight of the Ithacan hero thus smoothly journeying over the sea, and approaching the land of Phæacia, where, as the god of ocean well knew, it was decreed by fate that his troubles should cease. Full of wrath, the stern deity gathered the clouds, let loose the winds, and aroused the waves to fury. The raft which Ulysses had built, strong enough to sail in a gentle breeze, was unable to withstand the force of the sea when lashed by a furious gale. It was speedily shattered, and the luckless chief clung with difficulty to its yielding timbers, while wave after wave dashed over him with such force as to tear his garments from his back. Already had he given up all hope of life, when Leucothoe, a marine goddess who had once been a mortal, saw him and took pity on his hapless condition. Alighting on his raft, she bade him bind across his breast a scarf which she gave him, throw himself into the sea, and swim boldly towards the land. When he had reached firm ground, he was to take off the scarf and cast it back into the water. Having thus commanded,

Leucothoe again plunged into the ocean depths, and Ulysses, after hesitating for a moment, obeyed her direction. When Neptune saw him thus naked and battling with the waves, he ceased further to attempt his destruction, and retired to his ocean palace. As soon as he had withdrawn, Pallas descended and smoothed the stormy sea; and then at last, after swimming for two whole days



Neptune raising a Tempest to destroy Ulysses.

and nights, Ulysses on the third morning gained the shore of the island of Scheria. This country was inhabited by the Phæacians, a people who lived chiefly for feasting, dancing, and music, and cared nothing for war or for the fiercer delights of other mortals.

Ulysses was so exhausted by the hardships he had gone through that he lay down in the grass by the side of a stream which

just here descended to the sea, and fell asleep. But Minerva, ever heedful of his safety, now descended and entered the stately palace of Alcinous, the King of the Phæacians, where in a vision she bade Nausicaa, his only and beautiful daughter, to go forth with her maidens to the river and there wash and purify all the garments of the household in readiness for her bridal. Nausicaa, as soon as she woke, hastened to fulfil the injunction she had re-

Leucothoe preserving Ulysses.

ceived in her dream. Obtaining her father's permission, she took one of the royal chariots and placed in it the garments that were to be washed; then summoning her maidens, the whole party, bright with youth and beauty and happiness, and filling the air with the music of their laughter, drove down to the river-side, where they busily laved the garments, and spread them on the sand to dry in the sun. Then, as their work was finished, the

light-hearted virgins began to sport with one another. They were throwing a ball from hand to hand, when Nausicaa, by some mischance, cast it far out into the stream.

Now the place where they were was close by the thicket in which Ulysses was lying asleep, and the shrieks of mock-dismay which the maidens raised when they saw their ball gone out of their reach aroused him from his slumber. He hastily sprang to

Nausicaa throwing the Ball.

his feet, and emerged from the spot where he had lain unobserved. When the companions of Nausicaa saw him they fled in terror; she alone, inspired with courage by Minerva, stood firm. Ulysses gazing on her bright charms, knew not whether it was a goddess or a mortal upon whom he looked; but he addressed her with an earnest appeal that whether deity or a daughter of womankind she would take pity on his misfortunes; and to arouse her sym-

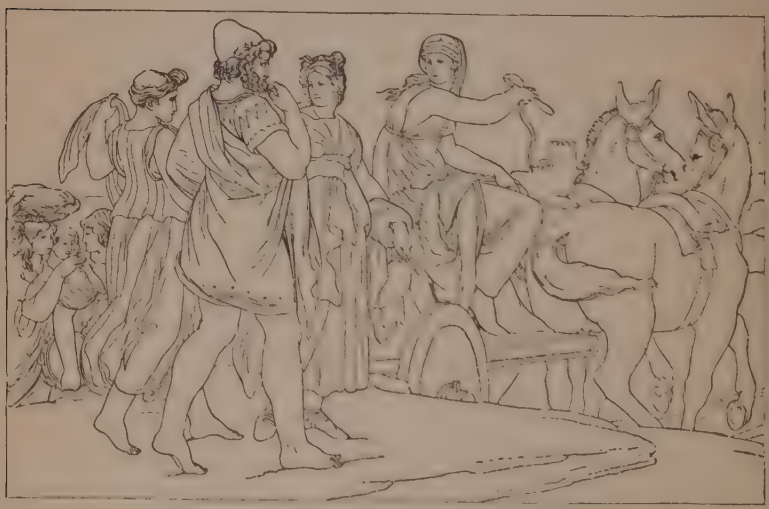
pathy, he told the melancholy story of his late sufferings on the sea.

Nausicaa, filled with womanly compassion, answered with a ready promise of hospitality. She recalled her frightened maidens, bade them show the stranger a safe bathing-place in the clear-flowing river, and selected suitable garments for him out of the ample store that had been brought down in the chariot. After he had washed from his body all traces of his long struggle with the sea, and had donned the garments, Ulysses seemed a different being.

"The warrior goddess gives his frame to shine
With majesty enlarged, and air divine;
Back from his brows a length of hair unfurls,
His hyacinthine locks descend in wavy curls.
As by some artist to whom Vulcan gives
His skill divine, a breathing statue lives;
By Pallas taught, he frames the wondrous mould,
And o'er the silver pours the fusile gold,
So Pallas his heroic frame improves
With heavenly bloom, and like a god he moves.
A fragrance breathes around; majestic grace
Attends his steps; th' astonished virgins gaze."

Nausicaa now explained to Ulysses that it would not befit her, as an unmarried maiden, to receive him into her chariot; but she pointed out to him the way which it would be best for him to take on foot to the city, and to the palace of King Alcinous, her father, where she advised him to claim hospitality and aid in the first instance from her mother, Queen Arete. Ulysses went by the path she had shown, and on entering the city was met by Pallas

in the guise of a youthful virgin. He asked her the way to the king's palace, and she led him thither, surrounding him with a cloud which hid him from the view of the townsfolk, who, hating all foreigners, might otherwise have treated him with insult. The hero, as he walked beside the disguised goddess, beheld with wonder the spacious streets, the lofty buildings, and the immense



Nausicaa directing Ulysses to her Father's Palace.

fortifications of the city. Arrived at the palace, the seeming maiden advised Ulysses, as Nausicaa had done, first to supplicate the queen, who, owing to her beauty and her goodness, was held in peculiar honour by her husband and her people.

Minerva then departed, and left Ulysses standing in admiration at the gate of the palace. A more splendid building he had

never seen in all his wanderings. The lofty walls were of solid brass, while the cornice was worked in metal that had been coloured with the deep blue of the sky. The doors were plated with gold; the entrance pillars and the lintels were of silver. Two rows of dogs, cunningly worked in gold and silver by the hand of Vulcan himself, guarded the entrance: though made of metal, they were so faithful to nature that they seemed alive. In the great hall within were golden thrones, and rich carpets covered the floor. Fifty handmaidens, under the direction of the queen, were always engaged in weaving beautiful fabrics, in embroidery, and other feminine arts.

Into this stately court Ulysses entered unseen—for the cloud cast about him by Minerva had not yet been dispelled—and found King Alcinous, his queen, and his nobles, partaking of the evening meal. Advancing to the throne, where Arete sat by the side of her lord, the hero threw himself at her feet. Then the veil of mist that had hidden him melted away, and when the assemblage beheld the stately stranger they were filled with awe and wonder.

"O queen!" exclaimed Ulysses, "a suppliant bends before thee. Take pity on me, and enable a wretched exile, friendless and worn with griefs, to return to his native land. So may the blessings of the gods attend upon you, and your royal consort, and your people."

With that he took his place amid the ashes on the hearth, as was the custom of those who sought protection or aid in a foreign land. Then Echenus, the oldest and wisest of King Alcinous' counsellors, rose and exclaimed, "It is not fitting that a guest should be suffered to remain amid the ashes. Well will it become

thee, O king, to raise him from so unworthy a seat, and give him a place of honour at thy table."

Alcinous heard and approved. With his own hand he conducted Ulysses to a seat beside his own, and invited him to partake of the feast. The duties of hospitality discharged, the king dismissed his followers, appointing a council for the next day to consider how the stranger's request for the means of return to his

Ulysses presenting himself to Alcinous and Arete.

own country could best be provided. Ulysses remained alone with the King and Queen Arete. The latter, looking upon him with interest, perceived that he was clad in garments which her own hands had made; and in order to obtain an explanation of this mysterious circumstance, she asked him to relate whence he had come. Ulysses, in reply, told of his long stay in Calypso's island, of his departure thence, the sufferings he had since endured.

and the gentle treatment he had met with at the hands of Nausicaa. Moved at the recital, Alcinous promised that swift ships should be placed at his disposal to carry him to his home, however distant it might be. Then a luxurious couch was prepared for the illustrious guest, who, for the space of a night, forgot all his sorrows in deep and undisturbed slumber.

The next day, having convened all his chiefs and nobles in

Ulysses weeping at the Song of Demodocus.

council, Alcinous directed that a ship be prepared with a chosen crew to convey the stranger to his home. That done, he held a great banquet at the palace, at which a famous blind bard named Demodocus sang a lay of the war before Troy, which so moved the heart of Ulysses that the tears fell fast from his eyes. Though he strove to conceal his emotion, it was observed by the king, who called on the bard to cease his song, and directed that games

should be held, to divert his guest's mind from sorrowful thoughts. Accordingly, foot-races, wrestling matches, encounters with the cestus, and the throwing of the disc took place. Some of the young men invited the stranger to take part in the contests; and when Ulysses would have excused himself, they hinted that he was unskilled in such pastimes. Stung by the taunt, he descended into the arena, and seizing a huge stone, hurled it with gigantic strength far beyond the utmost distance to which any of the Phæacians had been able to fling the much lighter disc.

Alcinous perceived that his guest had nothing to learn of the Phæacians in any warlike sport or manly exercise. He therefore summoned Demodocus to sing once more, and afterwards caused his sons to display their skill in the dance and in playing with the ball. Ulysses gazed with wonder and delight on a spectacle such as he had never before beheld, and pleased Alcinous by the warm praises he bestowed. The banquet being removed, Ulysses himself besought Demodocus to sing again the deeds of the Greeks before Troy. The bard complied, and once more the rehearsal of the great exploits in which he had borne a part overcame the hero with emotion. At this Alcinous invited his guest to reveal his name, and wherefore the story of Troy moved him to tears. Ulysses, in response, told who he was, and narrated the whole story of his adventures from the fall of Troy to his arrival on Calypso's island. While he was speaking all listened with eager interest; and when the long tale was ended, Alcinous directed that the ship which was to bear the wanderer back to Ithaca should be loaded with treasures, so that he should not, after all his trials, reach home empty-handed.

The next morning, after sharing with the king in solemn sacrifices to the gods, and taking a friendly farewell of his generous host, Ulysses embarked in the vessel that had been prepared to receive him. All day, guided by the skilful Phæacian mariners, the ship flew over the bounding waves. Towards dawn on the following morning it reached the rugged shore of Ithaca. Ulysses

The Phæacians leave Ulysses sleeping on the Shore.

was lying asleep on a couch that had been spread for him on the deck; but the crew bore him gently ashore as he lay, without disturbing his slumber, and piling all the treasures that had been bestowed upon him in a cave close to the strand, they re-embarked for their homeward journey. Thus, after so many years of weary travel, Ulysses was once more safe on his native shore, though he himself was yet unconscious of his arrival.

CHAPTER VI.

ULYSSES AND TELEMACHUS—THE ARRIVAL AT THE PALACE.

WHEN Ulysses awoke from his sleep he did not recognize the shore on which he found himself lying, and thought that the Phæacians had left him on some barbarous coast. He found, however, that they had faithfully placed all his treasures beside him; but he was wandering disconsolately about when Minerva, in the guise of a young hunter, met him, and he eagerly inquired of her the name of the country. She informed him that he was in Ithaca. The hero was overjoyed, but with his wonted prudence he concealed his emotion, and told the seeming youth a story of how he had been wrecked on the coast while on a voyage from Crete. But Pallas now revealed herself to him in her true form, removed the mist by which she had disguised from him the familiar features of his native land, and after assisting him to place in close concealment the gifts bestowed by the generous Alcinous, gave him counsel as to his future course. She acquainted him with the unshaken fidelity of Penelope, and the insolence and outrage of the suitors; but promised that when the day came for him to wreak his revenge, she would be at his side and would give him her aid. To enable him without fear of

discovery to visit the palace and make all needful preparations for his work of vengeance, the goddess transformed his appearance to one of extreme age and poverty, and then bade him seek the hospitality of his herdsman Eumæus, who had been faithful to his trust and firmly loyal during the whole period of his master's absence. Minerva then departed to watch over the return of Telemachus from Sparta; while Ulysses took his way to the house of Eumæus.

He found the faithful herdsman sitting at the door of his cottage. As the disguised Ulysses approached, the savage watch-dogs which guarded the flocks rushed out upon him with loud baying; but Eumæus drove them off, and gave the unknown guest a cordial welcome. He hastened to slaughter a hog, and to prepare a repast. Ulysses ate, praising the ready hospitality of the herdsman, who replied that this was a duty enjoined by the gods. It was but little, he added, that he could offer, for he was sore oppressed by the insolence of the lords who were taking advantage of his master's absence to waste his substance. And the true-hearted old servant lamented Ulysses' fate with so much feeling that the hero could scarce refrain from proclaiming himself. However, he endeavoured to console Eumæus by confidently predicting that before many days were over Ulysses would safely return to his kingdom. The herdsman refused to place faith in the prediction, but inquired the name of his guest, and the cause and manner of his arrival in Ithaca. With ready invention Ulysses told a long story of his birth in Crete, and his adventures there and in other countries. He won the regard of Eumæus by saying that he had fought along with Ulysses before Troy; and

when night fell, the herdsman provided him with a comfortable couch.

Meantime Minerva arrived at Sparta, and entered the royal palace, where Telemachus was sleeping after the pleasures of his banquet with Menelaus. She appeared to the prince in a vision; instructed him to hasten home at once; and warning him of the murderous design of Antinous, directed him to steer far distant

Ulysses conversing with Eumæus.

from the isle of Samos, under the cover of which the vessel of that haughty noble was lying in wait for him. As soon as morning broke, Telemachus, obeying the mandate of the vision, announced to Menelaus his purpose of immediate departure. The hospitable king would fain have detained him, but seeing that he was eager to return home to his unprotected mother, permitted him to go.

But both the king and Helen bestowed on the handsome youth rich gifts in testimony of their friendship. Then, in presence of auspicious auguries sent by Zeus, Telemachus and Pisistratus set off on their return journey to Pylos. There Telemachus persuaded his companion to permit him to go straightway on board his ship; for well he knew that had he returned to the palace of Nestor,

Telemachus bidding Farewell to Menelaus and Helen.

the old king would have been unwilling to consent to his speedy departure. Just as he was about to set sail, a fugitive from Argos named Theoclymenus, who had slain an enemy in that city, and was pursued by the friends of the dead man, came up and implored Telemachus to grant him asylum in his ship. In those days it was considered a duty to comply with such a request, and

Telemachus at once received Theoclymenus on board, and promised him hospitality in Ithaca. Then the anchor was raised, the sails spread, and the swift vessel ploughed her way past Chalcis and the coast of Elis. Mindful of Minerva's warning, Telemachus took a course that led him far from the shores of Samos, and in the early morning of the next day the ship was brought up close to the Ithacan shore. Telemachus himself landed at a point near the cottage of Eumæus, whither Minerva had told him in the vision to proceed, and bade his crew take the ship into the port of Ithaca.

Ulysses had had much conversation with the old herdsman, and had obtained from him many particulars as to the behaviour of the suitors, and concerning events that had happened in the many years during which the hero had now been an exile from his country. He had assisted Eumæus to drive forth his flocks to the pasture, and the pair were sitting down to the morning meal, when steps were heard approaching the cottage. The dogs sprang forth, but instead of receiving the new-comer with fierce barking, fawned about his feet and whined with joy. This Ulysses saw, and said to Eumæus, "Surely a friend is coming hither, for your dogs give him a better welcome than they bestowed on me."

The herdsman looked carelessly up from his repast, but when he saw who it was that had now reached the cottage-door, he dropped the trencher he was holding, sprang forward, and ardently embraced the prince, shedding tears of delight and declaring the fears he had felt because of the evil designs of Antinous and his companions. He begged Telemachus to enter and favour him

with his company for a while. Moved by this display of attachment on the part of the old servant, the youth complied; but even before he seated himself he asked for news of the queen his mother, and learned that no new evil had befallen her during his absence.

Eumæus now led the way into the cottage, and Ulysses, when

Arrival of Telemachus at Eumæus' Cottage.

he saw Telemachus approach, rose and would have given up his seat; but the prince, who had been taught to honour age, even though it were accompanied by poverty, refused to take the place occupied by this venerable stranger. He found another seat, and the herdsman spread abundant food on the board. After Telemachus had satisfied his hunger, he asked Eumæus whence came

his aged guest. Eumæus repeated the fictitious story told him by Ulysses, and suggested that the prince should take the stranger under his protection.

"Alas!" replied Telemachus, "what protection can I give, perpetually threatened as I am by the ambition and insolence of the suitors?—However, stranger, I will bestow on thee such gifts as

Minerva restoring Ulysses to his own Shape.

a prince ought to give; and for the present, thou hadst better remain in this hut, which is more secure than the royal palace, since if thou wert insulted there, I could not avenge thee."

After some further talk, Telemachus sent Eumæus to inform the queen secretly of his safe return. As soon as the good herds-

man had departed, Minerva suddenly appeared to Ulysses, and bade him make himself known to his son, at the same time waving over him a golden wand, which at once restored his natural and majestic aspect. Telemachus, who beheld the transformation without knowing its cause, was naturally amazed, and accosted the hero as a god; but Ulysses, only too happy to be able to indulge the feelings of a father, pressed him to his bosom in a passionate embrace, while he exclaimed, "No god am I, Telemachus, but thy father—the father for whose sake thou hast already endured so much care and sorrow."

The prince at first could not believe the happy tidings to be true; but when he was convinced that it was indeed his father who stood before him, he was overcome with joy. When both were become more composed, Ulysses briefly related the manner of his arrival in Ithaca, and then questioned Telemachus as to the number of the suitors, in order to judge whether it would be necessary to obtain any assistance for the work of their destruction.

"Wise and brave as thou art," replied his son, "I fear that thou wilt not be able to encounter so great a host. More than fifty, all warriors of renown, come from Dulichium; twenty-four from Samos; twenty from Zacynthus; while twelve of our own young nobles are also among them, and they have many slaves and followers. Against so many foes, what can we do alone?"

"What need shall we have of other help," asked Ulysses in return, "if we have that of Pallas?"

"Nay, with her aid we might defy all mankind," said Telemachus.

"That aid, on the day when it is needed, we shall have," replied his father. "But do thou now follow the course I direct. Return to-morrow betimes to the palace. Thither Eumæus shall lead me, again disguised as a ragged and aged mendicant; and if yon lawless crew should offer insults to me, thou must endure and show no sign of anger. Then wait till I give the signal, and as soon as I do so, remove from the great hall of the palace all the weapons that hang on the walls. If this act arouse the suspicions of the suitors, tell them thou art fearful lest, when they are heated with wine, they should use the keen blades against one another. But leave for each of us a sword, javelin, and shield. Lastly, I charge thee above all to keep secret from every one the knowledge of my return."

Telemachus promised to obey all these injunctions, and he and his father sat long together planning their vengeance against the suitors.

In the meantime, the ship which had brought back the prince arrived in the harbour, and the crew hastened on shore, whence one of them, indiscreetly eager to bear the good news of Telemachus' return to Penelope, hurried to the palace just as Eumæus was entering, and cried aloud to the queen that her son had come back in safety. More prudent, Eumæus approached Penelope closely, and delivered his message so that it reached her ear alone. But the suitors had overheard what the sailor had reported, and they gathered in consternation about the palace gate. While they were considering what it were best to do, Antinous and his companions returned from their useless expedition, anxious to learn if any news of Telemachus had been received. When he

was informed that the prince had reached Ithaca before him, he was filled with amazement and anger. "He has escaped us," said he, "by the favour of some protecting deity; but he shall nevertheless perish. We will not wait till he has brought against us hired enemies from Pylos and Sparta; let us forthwith arrange an ambush and surprise him on his way to the palace."

The daring of Antinous, as well as his rank, had made him the leader among the suitors, and all the others agreed to act according to his counsels; but it was finally agreed that the death of Telemachus should not be undertaken until after the oracles had been consulted, to learn whether the gods would approve the deed. Thus strangely, in those distant times, did men mix up religious observances with the perpetration of the most dreadful crimes. But Medon, as before, went to the queen, and informed her of the new design against the life of her son. Full of indignation, she hastened into the hall, and reproached the suitors for their meditated crime. Eurymachus, another of the leaders among them, who was always ready of speech and skilled in the arts of deceit, protested that they had no evil intent against the prince, whose life, he declared, he would defend even at the cost of his own. Penelope was not deceived by his words, but she was sadly conscious of her own helplessness against those insolent lords, and so withdrew to weep in the privacy of her own apartments.

When Eumæus returned to his home, Ulysses, by the power of Minerva, again wore the aspect of an aged mendicant. For that night Telemachus remained at the herdsman's cottage. The next morning he set out for the palace, bidding Eumæus lead the

stranger to the city. The prince had a tender interview with his mother, to whom he recounted his adventures at Pylos and Sparta. Afterwards, he brought Theoclymenus to the palace, and presented him to the queen; and the Argive gave comfort to Penelope by informing her that he was a soothsayer, and that from the signs and portents he had recently beheld, he was assured of Ulysses' speedy and safe return to his home.

Meanwhile Eumæus led Ulysses, in his disguise as a beggar, toward the city. On their way they passed a fountain at the roadside, where it chanced that Melanthius, a head-servant in the palace, who had joined the party of the suitors, was watering some goats. He hated Eumæus because of his fidelity to the royal house, and now heaped insults upon him and his companion. He even spurned Ulysses with his foot. For a moment the hero hesitated as to whether he should not strike the wretch dead at his feet; but he soon mastered his wrath, and showed no sign of impatience. Melanthius turned scornfully away, muttering threats against the herdsman, who, with Ulysses, pursued his way to the palace.

They now entered the gates. Here lay a dog, worn out and almost dead from age, which Ulysses had reared and trained in the happy days before he sailed for Troy. But old and feeble as he was, he recognized the step he had not heard for twenty years; he knew his master, strove to crawl toward him and lick his hand, and sank dead in the effort. This proof of the fidelity of a brute touched Ulysses to the heart, and he could not restrain his tears.

Eumæus, at a sign from Telemachus, took a humble place at

the table where the daily feast was going forward. Ulysses stood humbly at the threshold. The prince caused some food to be sent to him from the table; and after he had partaken of it, he supplicated the suitors for alms. They looked at him with curiosity, knowing not whence he had come; whereupon Melanthius reported that Eumæus had led him to the palace. Antinous sternly

Ulysses and his Dog.

reproached the herdsman for thus bringing vagrants to infest the land. Eumæus replied with spirit that charity to the unfortunate was a duty enjoined by the gods, and that he cared little for Antinous' condemnation if he had the approval of the queen and the prince.

Telemachus now intervened, sarcastically saying that Antinous

might surely be generous with food from another's table. The haughty noble answered that if every one were as liberal as he, the wretched beggar would not trouble them for long. So saying, he threatened the disguised Ulysses with his heavy footstool; but the other suitors filled the mendicant's scrip with food. Wishing to put Antinous to further proof, Ulysses again besought him, but received nothing but angry reproaches. Finally, in his rage, the insolent lord threw a heavy tripod at the hero, and struck him on the shoulder. He stood unmoved; but warned the aggressor that the gods, who protected the old and poor, would avenge the outrage.

"Peace, wretch!" cried Antinous, "or I will have thee dragged from the palace and scourged through the streets."

The other suitors condemned his unseemly violence, while Telemachus burned with concealed wrath. Penelope, who had observed the scene, and was filled with pity for the aged mendicant, now desired to speak with him in private, having learned from Eumæus that he had been a comrade of her husband before Troy; but Ulysses, ever cautious, begged that the interview might be delayed, lest the suitors should become aware of it, and offer rude interruption.

Then the queen withdrew to her chamber, and Ulysses sat at the gate of the palace, while within the great hall the suitors kept up their riot and revel till the day was far advanced.

CHAPTER VII.

THE FIGHT WITH IRUS—THE SLAUGHTER OF THE SUITORS.

AS Ulysses thus sat at his own gates, in the guise of a beggar, with tattered garments and limbs that seemed to tremble from weakness, there approached a man named Irus, a fellow of great bulk and stature, but of base mind. He also was a mendicant, because he found it an easier way of getting a living to wander from house to house, begging alms wherever there was feasting and prodigality, than to put forth his strength in honest work. He had therefore long been accustomed to frequent the gates of the palace, because the wasteful suitors had bestowed on him, with lavish hand, food from the stores which of right were not theirs to give. When Irus beheld another occupying the place which he had grown to look upon as his own, he was greatly enraged. His remarkable size and muscular strength had made him a tyrant among his fellows, although at heart he was a thorough coward. Seeing that the new-comer was old, and to all appearance feeble, he came up to him with threatening words and gestures.

"Hence, dotard!" he cried, "and begone quickly, lest thou be dragged away by the heels." Then, as the suitors gathered round,

and, in the hope of amusement, encouraged him, he continued: "See, these nobles and princes are as wishful as I am to be rid of thy presence. But that thou art old, and that the gods teach us to honour age, I would not have wasted words upon thee, but at once have taught thee my wishes by hard blows. Away at once, unless thou art desirous to feel the weight of my arm."

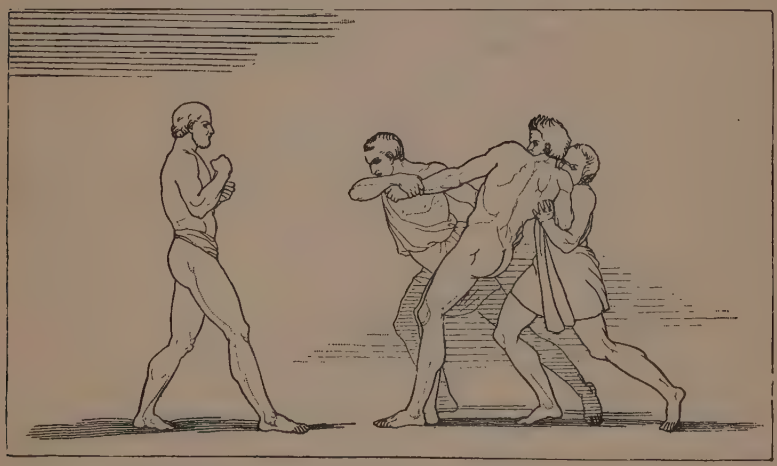
Sternly eying the bully, Ulysses answered: "Insolent! why thus rail at one who has given thee no offence? How can my presence here injure thee? Dost thou envy me the gifts which charity bestows on one still more wretched than thyself? Insult me no further; for if my wrath be once aroused, thou wilt have bitter cause to regret it."

But Irus, confident in his youth and strength, replied with still louder abuse, and challenged the disguised hero to fight. The suitors laughed heartily at the prospect of a fray betwixt such champions, and formed a ring about them, urging them on to the combat, and promising that the victor should be rewarded with all the broken victuals from that day's feast. Ulysses now pretended to be reluctant to face so formidable an antagonist, and called on the suitors to swear that they would stand neutral. They nodded in assent, and Telemachus declared that any one who interfered should be punished by his own hand.

Then Ulysses threw off his miserable garments, and bared his body for the fight. When the lookers-on saw his broad shoulders, his strong thighs, the width of his chest, and the muscles that stood out like knotted cordage on his arms, they were astonished. As for Irus, he sickened with fear, and could scarcely be dragged forward to face his antagonist.

"Miserable wretch!" cried Antinous, "dost thou shrink from a fight thou hast thyself provoked, and with one so old? Come, use these great limbs of thine, and face thy foe like a man, or I will have thee shipped off to Echetus, the cruel King of Epirus, who cuts off men's ears and noses."

Thus threatened, the trembling Irus faced his opponent, and the two raised their hands and stood watching an opportunity to



The Fight with Irus.

strike. Irus first darted a blow which alighted full on Ulysses' shoulder; but the king stood as unmoved as though he had not felt it. Now he struck in his turn, and though, unwilling to slay his miserable antagonist, he put forth but half his force, his fist, alighting on the side of Irus' face, broke the jaw-bone, knocked out most of the wretch's teeth, and stretched him senseless and bleeding on the ground.

The suitors shouted with laughter when they beheld the bully thus suddenly laid low. They dragged him along and propped him against the palace wall, where, as he stood bleeding and stupefied, Ulysses handed him a staff to support his tottering limbs, and threw him his scrip, bidding him in future show mercy to the poor and the stranger, lest a still worse punishment should befall him. The lords bestowed loud praises on Ulysses; and Antinous, who with all his faults could respect and admire courage, himself brought him food and wine, wishing him prosperity. The hero, in return, gave him a solemn warning that a day of retribution for the suitors was at hand, and that it would be well for him to quit the palace before Ulysses appeared in it. The young noble could not resist a feeling of awe and depression as he listened; but pride forbade him to obey the counsel that was given him.

Penelope was now inspired by Minerva to make her appearance in the hall. The goddess redoubled her charms, so that the lords flocked about her, full of admiration, and Eurymachus paid an ardent tribute of praise to her beauty.

"Alas!" returned the queen, "my beauty quitted me when my dear lord left me; nor is it for that you seek my hand. True lovers are always eager to testify their admiration by gifts; but you make her whom you profess to love your prey."

The reproach was one of which the suitors could not deny the justice, and, anxious to show the sincerity of their passion, one and all presented costly gifts to the queen, who, after receiving them, retired again to her own apartments. The lords then gave themselves up to dance and song till the shades of night began

to fall, when the female slaves of the palace began to light and trim the torches.

"It is not fitting," said Ulysses, "that modest maidens should remain in company with men. Do ye withdraw and wait upon your mistress, and I will take charge of the torches."

The girls, who preferred the pleasures of the hall to the quiet of the queen's apartments, answered with scorn; but he threatened them with the displeasure of the prince, and they retired in anger and confusion. Then, as he went round the hall, kindling the lamps, Eurymachus insolently reproached him with his liking for work that ought to be performed by slaves. Angered by his taunts, the disguised hero returned a bitter answer, which so enraged Eurymachus that he hurled a heavy footstool at Ulysses' head. He, however, dexterously evaded the missile, which struck and overthrew a youth who was handing round the goblets of wine to the ever-thirsty lords. An angry clamour forthwith arose, and the suitors were about to attack Ulysses, when Telemachus interfered and quelled the rising tumult, and persuaded the riotous guests to retire to their couches.

When they had all gone, Telemachus assisted his father to remove all the arms from their places on the walls of the great banqueting-chamber to another apartment. Then the prince retired to rest; and Ulysses sought the chamber of Penelope, to hold his promised interview with her. They held a long conversation. The queen confided to the seeming stranger all her sorrows, the artifices she had employed to elude the demands of the suitors, and the unshaken love she still felt for her lord. He, filled with secret pleasure at her avowals, consoled her by stories

of his companionship with Ulysses before Troy, and by predictions of the hero's speedy return. Penelope was delighted with his words and bearing, and directed Euryclea, an old and faithful handmaid who had nursed Ulysses when a child, to conduct the stranger to the bath, and provide him with better attire. Euryclea obeyed; but while she was ministering to his needs in the

Euryclea discovers Ulysses by the Scar on his Knee.

bath, she beheld on his knee a scar—the mark of a wound he had received when a youth from a wild boar he had hunted and slain on Mount Parnassus. With tears pouring down her face, the faithful servant embraced Ulysses. "My son—my king!" she rapturously exclaimed, and would instantly have conveyed the joyful news to the queen, had not the hero restrained her, and

warned her to keep the secret strictly till he should have accomplished his vengeance against the suitors.

Having bathed, he returned to the queen, who announced her purpose of deciding her fate on the morrow, by promising her hand to him among the suitors who could bend Ulysses' bow, and hit the mark the hero was wont to pierce when he practised archery in the happy days of his early married life. Her disguised lord approved her purpose, and said that Ulysses would himself appear to take part in the contest, and disappoint the suitors' hopes.

Penelope then caused a couch to be prepared for the stranger-guest in the porch of the palace. There he reposed for the night, though sleep at first refused to visit his eyelids; nor was it until Minerva had appeared to him, and renewed her promises of aid against the suitors, that he could compose himself to rest. In the morning the whole palace was early astir with preparations for a great feast to be given in honour of Apollo. Eumæus brought the choicest of his flocks for slaughter, and Melanthius his finest goats. That faithless servant offered fresh insults to Ulysses; while Eumæus engaged with him in friendly conversation, and was filled with joy when he declared that the hour of his king's return and of the destruction of the suitors was at hand. When the feast was spread, Antinous and others of the lords, mindful of the incident of the previous night, heaped insolent abuse on Ulysses, and one of them even attempted violence, but was checked by the stern reproofs of Telemachus. In the midst of the banquet, strange portents, sent by the gods, foretold the coming tragedy. The colour of the wine turned suddenly to that of

blood; a deep gloom overspread the skies; and strange and ghastly shapes flitted about the hall over the heads of the feasters. Theoclymenus, who, as I have said, was a soothsayer, understood these signs; he rose and warned the lords that their destruction was impending. But they received his words with derision. A ghastly mirth possessed them; they laughed ceaselessly without cause, and plied the wine-cups as fast as the attendant slaves could fill them.

Penelope with the Bow of Ulysses.

And now Penelope, faithful to her purpose, sought the treasure-chamber of the palace, where lay in grim repose the mighty bow of Ulysses. There it had rested unstrung during all the years of his absence. Taking it in her hand, and followed by her maids,

one of whom carried in a casket the gold and silver rings through which Ulysses had been wont to send the well-aimed darts, she descended to the great hall. There she announced that she would become the wife of him who could bend the bow and shoot an arrow through the rings. The suitors heard the declaration with joy, for each hoped to be the successful competitor. Telemachus claimed to make the trial first, urging that if he alone achieved

Penelope carrying the Bow to the Suitors.

the task he should have the right to refuse his mother's hand to any of her wooers. To this all assented, and he took up the mighty weapon. Thrice he essayed to bend it, and thrice he failed. Then, at a secret sign from his father, he forebore, and invited the suitors to enter into the competition. One after another, the lords attempted the task, but in vain, till only Antinous and Eurymachus remained. In the meantime, Ulysses had sum-

moned Eumæus, and another faithful servant named Philætius, outside the hall, and there revealed himself to them. When the tumult of their joy had a little subsided, he bade Eumæus return with him to the hall, and hand him the bow when all the suitors had failed to bend it. To Philætius he confided the task of securing all the doors and keeping them closed in spite of any tumult that might arise.

Ulysses and Eumæus now re-entered the banqueting chamber. Eurymachus was essaying to bend the bow, but he succeeded no better than the others, and laying it down, confessed his bitter shame at his failure. Antinous, however, suggested that the reason why all had failed was that the day was sacred to Apollo, who would not permit his festival to be desecrated by such recreations. He therefore proposed that the trial should be suspended for the night, and renewed the next day. The other suitors all approved; but Ulysses now humbly requested to be permitted to make trial of the weapon, merely to see whether his old cunning in archery had deserted him. This request, from one who to their eyes was no better than a wretched mendicant, provoked the wrath of the lords, who threatened the disguised hero with death if he dared to attempt a feat in which they had failed. Penelope and Telemachus both urged the claim of the stranger-guest; and in the tumult that ensued, the prince begged his mother to withdraw. Immediately she had complied with his request, Philætius, obeying the command of Ulysses, secured all the doors of the hall, and then took a place near his master. Eumæus, meanwhile, in spite of the threats of the suitors, conveyed the bow to Ulysses. The hero handled it

tenderly, examined it to see that it remained uninjured—the lords scoffing at him the while—then raising it, bent it with ease and shot an arrow which passed through all the rings, and pierced through the solid gate behind. The spectators gazed in wonder and fear; while, at a signal from his father, Telemachus girded on his sword, took a javelin in his hand, and stood by his side.

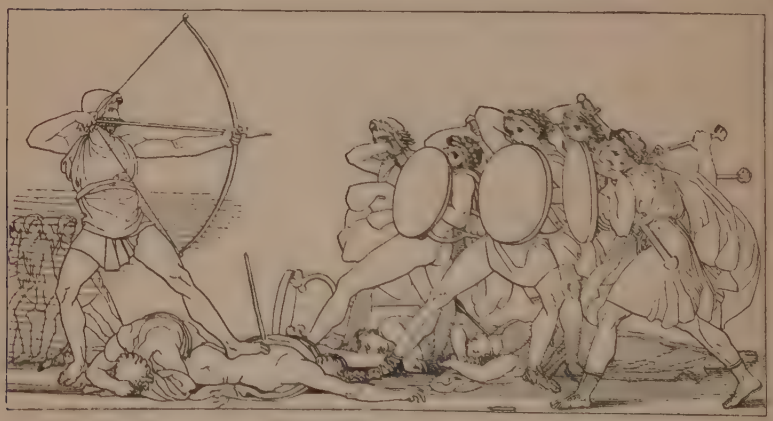
And now the rags dropped from the hero's stately form, and he stood confessed in his own true majesty. Seizing the quiver, he emptied the arrows at his feet, and fitting one to the string, cried:—

> "One venturous game this hand has won to-day,
> Another, princes! yet remains to play;
> Another mark our arrow must attain.
> Phœbus, assist! nor be the labour vain."

Even as he spoke, the vengeful dart whistled through the air, and pierced through the neck of Antinous, who at the moment was lifting a goblet of wine to his lips. He fell in the agonies of death on the marble pavement, which soon was swimming with mingled blood and wine. The other suitors, beholding the fate of their chief, were struck with horror and rage. They looked eagerly about for arms, but they looked in vain. Even yet they did not recognize Ulysses, but imagined that the arrow which had slain Antinous had been misdirected; but they loudly declared that the stranger should pay for the deed with his life. Ulysses answered:—

> "Dogs, ye have had your day: ye feared no more
> Ulysses, vengeful from the Trojan shore;

While, to your lust and spoil a guardless prey,
Our house, our wealth, our helpless handmaids lay:
Laws or divine or human failed to move,
Or shame of men, or dread of gods above:
Heedless alike of infamy or praise,
Or fame's eternal voice in future days:
The hour of vengeance, wretches, now is come;
Impending fate is yours, and instant doom."



Ulysses killing the Suitors.

When the hero thus revealed himself, the miserable suitors stood overwhelmed with shame and terror. Eurymachus alone mustered courage to speak.

"If thou art indeed Ulysses," he said, "thy wrongs are great. But already the chief offender lies dead at thy feet. Spare, therefore, the rest of us, and we will pay a heavy ransom to atone for the waste of thy treasures and the evil we have wrought beneath thy roof."

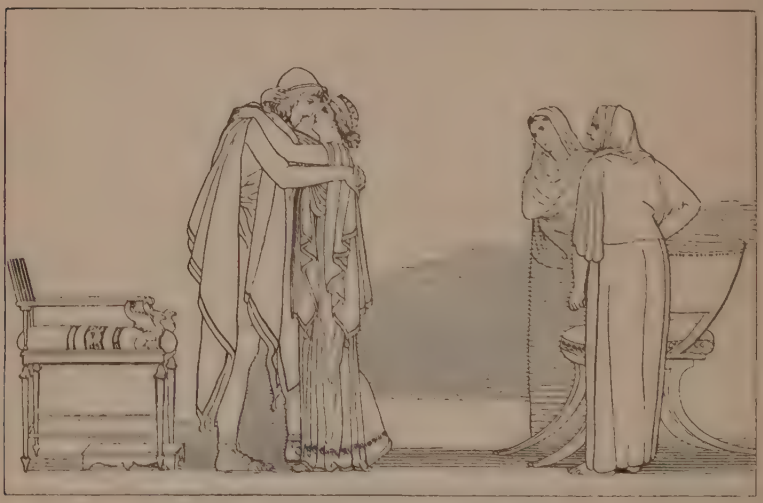
Disdainfully Ulysses made answer: "Not all the treasures you possess could buy mercy for you. The penalty I demand is your lives;—your choice, to fight or die unresisting."

At this Eurymachus drew his sword, and, urging the rest to follow his example, rushed against Ulysses. But the hero, raising his own sword, smote him to the ground with a deadly wound

Telemachus interceding for Phemius.

in the breast. Then followed a terrible scene of struggle and slaughter. Ulysses twanged his deadly bow till all his arrows were exhausted, each having found a target in the bosom of one of the suitors. In the meantime Telemachus and Eumæus with their spears prevented the wretched lords from advancing to attack the king at close quarters. The arrows all spent, Ulysses

prepared to do battle against the rest of the doomed band with spear and javelin. But the traitor Melanthius had contrived to find his way to the chamber where the arms were stored, and thence he bore to the remaining suitors such arms as they needed. He had gone to seek for more, when he was seized and securely bound by Eumæus and Philætius. In the hall the work of

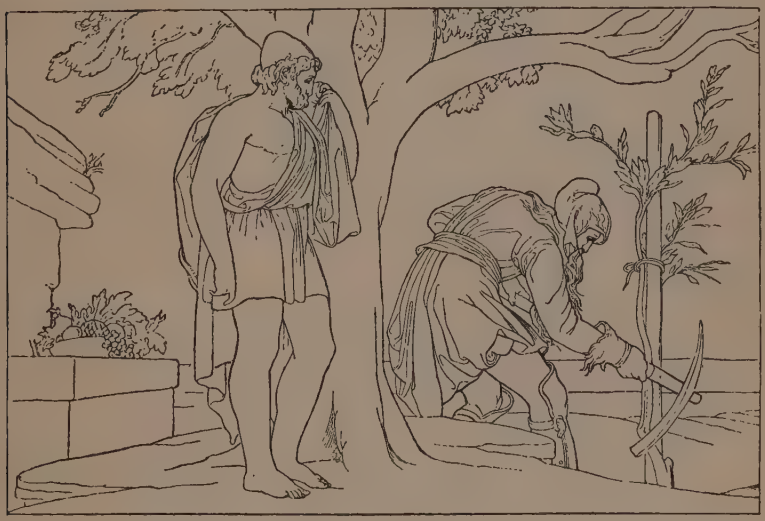


The Meeting of Ulysses and Penelope.

destruction continued. Pallas, in the form of a swallow, perched on one of the rafters and watched the combat, warding off the blows of the suitors from Ulysses, and giving additional force to the strokes of the king and his son. The clash of arms, the cries of rage and agony, shook the very walls. At last the fearful expiation was completed. All the haughty wooers who had so

long troubled the peace of Penelope and heaped insults on her son lay stretched in their blood upon the pavement. Medon the herald and Phemius the bard alone were spared.

The mournful shades of the slain were conducted in a melancholy procession to Hades by Mercury. There, accosted by the spectre of Agamemnon, who wondered at the arrival of the



Ulysses and his Father.

phantoms of so many youthful warriors, they had to relate the story of their own crime and of its terrible punishment.

Ulysses caused those of the female slaves who had neglected their mistress, and sought the company of the suitors, to carry out the bodies of the slain and to cleanse the palace of the bloody traces of the combat. That done, he ordered them and the

wretched Melanthius to be put to death. Then at last he sought the presence of his beloved and faithful queen. The joy of their meeting, and the mingled happiness and sorrow with which she listened to the story of his long wanderings and many woes, may be imagined, but cannot worthily be told.

Thereafter, Ulysses proceeded to the rural mansion where dwelt his aged father Laertes, and bore comfort to the old man, who had so long sorrowed for his son. In Ithaca the friends of the slain suitors at first attempted a revolt against their king; but Ulysses speedily overcame them in battle, and having completely re-established his authority, reigned long and happy years, blessed in the love of his beautiful wife and the devotion of his brave and dutiful son.

THE END.

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